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THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2005

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Sgt. 1st Class Jefferson Pridgen, working with the 2nd Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, hands out election information to an Iraqi shopkeeper in the Tanim district near Ramadi.

JOSEPH GIORDANO/Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

War on terrorism

Gtmo detainee released: Kuwait's first detainee to be freed from the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, is now being interrogated by prosecutors in his home country, the head of a group that lobbied for his release said Tuesday.

U.S. forces captured Nasser al-Mufairi, 27, in Afghanistan and transferred him to the Guantanamo base with other accused supporters of the country's ousted Taliban regime or al-Qaida terrorist network.

Kuwaiti prosecutors detained and questioned him soon after his arrival from Cuba in a government airplane, but it was not clear yet if any charges would be pressed, according to Khaled al-Odah, the father of a Guantanamo detainee.

World

India missile test: India tested its most sophisticated short-range missile on Wednesday, a news agency reported.

The surface-to-air missile was test-fired from a range in India's main testing center in Chandipur-on-Sea in the eastern state of Orissa, Press Trust of India said.

With a range of six miles, the solid fuel-propelled missile known as "Trishul" is capable of targeting aircraft and sea-skimming missiles. It can carry a warhead of up to 33 pounds.

Kuwait terrorism: Suspected terrorists who shot dead police officers received money from sources in a "brotherly neighboring country," the interior minister said in remarks published Wednesday.

Some of the 25 men detained for the shoot-outs with police on Jan. 10 and 15 will be released by the prosecutor general next week, the interior minister, Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmed al-Sabah, was quoted as saying by the pro-government newspaper Al-Anba.

The minister did not name the neighboring country from which the suspects got their funds, but he said Kuwait was receiving "around the clock" cooperation from Saudi Arabia. Some of the detainees are Saudi nationals.

Russia school seizure: A top Russian prosecutor said Wednesday that seven suspected accomplices in the terrorist seizure of a school in southern Russia had been killed in special operations, two arrested and charged, and six put on a federal wanted list.

Nikolai Shepel, the deputy prosecutor general for the southern federal district, said that criminal cases had also been opened against five police officers for negligence that permitted the school in the southern town of Beslan to be seized in September, leading to the deaths of more than 330 hostages.

Russian officials have said 32 raiders took part in the attack and 31 of them were killed while one was captured.

States

Police discrimination lawsuit: A former Inglewood, Calif., police officer who was fired for punching a black teenager and slamming him against a patrol car was awarded \$1.6 million Tuesday by the jury in a discrimination lawsuit he and his partner brought against the city.

The jury voted 11-1 in favor of the verdict for Jeremy Morse, said defense attorney Gregory Smith. He said the jury was unanimous in awarding \$810,000 to Morse's partner, Bije Duvish, who had been disciplined in connection with the 2002 incident.

"This is not the first time police officers have been trapped in race situations where



Severe California weather: Field workers pick broccoli in a soggy field in Somis, Calif. Record rainfall that swept through California last week cost Ventura County farmers at least \$38 million, although growers in other areas reported only minor damage to crops. The initial estimate of \$38 million in crop and equipment losses was expected to rise, county Agricultural Commissioner W. Earl McPhail said Tuesday.

they suffered unfairly," Smith said in a phone interview after the verdict was read. Morse, 27, said he was very happy with the verdict.

Nail gun accident: A construction worker who shot himself in the head with a nail gun — an accident he didn't discover until he went to the dentist with a nagging toothache — said he'll change his line of work.

"I'll make pizzas," Patrick Lawler, 23, said Tuesday.

Lawler, who may be released from the hospital as early as Wednesday, was working on a house near Breckenridge, Colo., when he accidentally fired the nail into his head.

National Zoo troubles: Conditions at the National Zoo improved during the past year, but a number of weaknesses remain at the venerable institution, according to a report released Wednesday by the National Academies' National Research Council.

After several animal deaths in early 2003, Congress asked the council to conduct a yearlong review of the zoo's flagship Washington facility and its Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Va. The report said "more than a decade of decline in almost every aspect of zoo operation" preceded the deaths.

It urged the zoo to establish "rigorous animal-care staff training as well as a climate of accountability and personal responsibility."

Kerik investigation: To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, the Department of Investigations' top inspector will not take part in the investigation of former New York City police commissioner Bernard Kerik, officials said.

Michael Caruso has been inspector general of the Department of Investigations since 1990 and is also an assistant commissioner at the Department of Correction and is responsible for corruption investigations there. His removal from the Kerik probe was announced Tuesday by Department of Investigations spokeswoman Emily Gest.

The agency did not explain why Caruso would not participate, but it is known that he attended Kerik's wedding reception in 1998, and Kerik wrote in his autobiography that Caruso helped him prepare for a job interview in 2000 with then-mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

Blake murder trial: A prosecution witness at Robert Blake's murder trial acknowledged he was unsure whether gunshot residue found on the actor's hands and clothes

came from firing a gun the night Blake's wife was fatally shot.

"Is there anything about your tests that would exclude the possibility that the defendant fired a gun that night?" Deputy District Attorney Shellee Samuels asked corner's criminalist Steven Dowell.

"No," Dowell said during testimony Tuesday.

But on cross-examination by defense attorney M. Gerald Schwartzbach, Dowell said it was also possible Blake had gunshot residue on his hands and clothes from other sources the night Bonny Lee Bakley was killed.

Coast Guard safety measures: The Coast Guard plans new safety measures to protect towboat crews from high water after a tugboat sank on the Ohio River last week, killing three of its seven crew members and leaving one presumed dead.

A task force will examine whether to impose towing limits, identify dangerous stretches of river and issue safety rules during high water, Coast Guard Cmdr. Wymen W. Briggs said Tuesday. Its members will also consider whether an assist vessel should be required in dangerous parts of the Ohio during fast currents.

The task force includes members of the Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh, and a representative of Campbell Transportation Co., which owns the towboat that was carried away by swift currents.

Michael Jackson case: A television journalist has asked a judge to deny a request by prosecutors for him to testify at Michael Jackson's child molestation trial.

Martin Bashir's 2003 documentary prompted an outcry after Jackson said on camera that he continued to sleep in the same room as young boys. Bashir, who now works for ABC News, was called by prosecutors to testify about other things the pop star said that may not have made the two-hour documentary's final cut.

But Bashir said in a motion filed Tuesday that his work "speaks for itself" and that under California's shield law, journalists cannot be forced to testify about what they observe while reporting a story.

Bashir's motion is to be considered at a Jan. 28 hearing.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



Jackson

Bomb blasts echo across Iraq capital

BY HAMZA HENDAWI
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A wave of car bombings shook the Iraqi capital Wednesday, killing at least 12 people as rebels stepped up their offensive to block the Jan. 30 national election. Other attacks were reported north and south of the capital.

U.S. military officials put the death toll from the day's violence at 26, but the number was based on initial field reports and witnesses and Iraqi officials put the toll lower. Iraqi authorities said 12 people were killed in the bombings and another person killed in a drive-by shooting on a Kurdish political party office.

Al-Qaida's branch in Iraq said it carried out the first of the day's blasts, at the Australian Embassy in the capital. A truck packed with explosives went off outside the concrete barriers in front of the embassy about 7 a.m., killing two people and wounding several, including two Australian soldiers.

"A lion of monotheism and faith ... carried out a martyrdom operation near the Australian Embassy," the group al-Qaida in Iraq said in a Web statement. The group is led by Jordanian-born militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who has allied himself with Osama bin Laden's terror network.

A half-hour after the embassy blast, another car bomb killed six at a police station located next to a hospital in eastern Baghdad, the Iraqi Interior Ministry said.

A third car bombing struck at the main gate to an Iraqi military garrison located at a disputed report in central Baghdad. An officer at the Iraqi Defense Ministry said three Iraqi army troops were killed in that attack.

The U.S. military also said a car bomb detonated southwest of Baghdad International Airport, killing two Iraqi security guards.

Hours later, another car bomb went off in northern Baghdad around noon near a bank and a Shiite Muslim mosque. Iraqi police said one person was killed at that bombing.

Elsewhere in the capital, insurgents in a car fired on a Baghdad office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, killing one of its members and wounding another, PUK officials said.

Outside the capital, Maj. Gen. Wirya Maarouf, the dean of a police academy in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, escaped an assassination attempt when gunmen opened fire on his convoy in the city of Irbil. One bystander was killed and another injured, police Col. Tharwat AbdulKarim.

In the northern city of Dahuk, a roadside bomb exploded near the convoy of provincial Gov. Nejirwan Ahmed, but he was not injured,



U.S. soldiers inspect the scene of a car bomb explosion Wednesday in Baghdad. A wave of car bombings shook the Iraqi capital as rebels stepped up an offensive to block national elections.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Tuesday, at least 1,368 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,073 died as a result of hostile action. The Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is six higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Tuesday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

The latest deaths reported by the U.S. military:

■ A soldier was killed Tuesday in a roadside bombing in Baghdad.

■ A Marine died on Monday, bringing to three the number of Marines who died Mon-

day while conducting security operations in Iraq's Anbar province.

The latest identifications reported by military:

■ Marine Cpl. Paul C. Holter III, 21, Corpus Christi, Texas, died Friday at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Army Spc. Alan L. Kamolovitch, 21, of Blairtown, N.J., died Monday in a vehicle accident in Baghdad, Iraq, assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, New York, N.Y.

■ Army Pfc. Francis C. Ohaji, 21, Queens Village, N.Y., died Monday after he was involved in a vehicle accident Sunday in Baghdad, Iraq, assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, New York, N.Y.

■ Marine Sgt. Jaydon D. Patterson, 26, Sedley, Va., killed Saturday in Iraq's Babil province, assigned to 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

AbdulKarim said.

An Iraqi police officer was killed Wednesday in another car bombing in the largely Shiite city of Hillah south of Baghdad, the Polish military said.

Fresh clashes erupted Wednesday between U.S. troops and insurgents in the northern city of Mosul. A car bomb exploded beside a U.S. convoy in the eastern part of the city, and two Iraqis were killed when American troops opened fire after the blast, witnesses said. There were no reported casualties among the Americans.

Also, in the city of Kirkuk, two human rights leaders were killed, officials said. Their bodies were found shot in the head and chest after being kidnapped Tuesday, police said.

On Wednesday, the U.S. military acknowledged that its soldiers opened fire on a car as it approached their checkpoint, killing two civilians in the vehicle's front seat. Six children riding in the backseat were unhurt.

It wasn't clear from a military statement whether the two victims were the children's parents. "Military officials extend their condolences for this unfortunate incident," the statement said.

A militant group posted a video on the Web on Wednesday showing gunmen killing execution-style two Iraqis said to have set up an Internet system in northern Iraq to help in this month's elections.

The video appeared on a Web site known for carrying messages about Islamic militant groups. Its authenticity could not be verified.

Fallujah easing back into normalcy

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The former insurgent stronghold of Fallujah has calmed somewhat, with signs of commerce reappearing on the streets and no shots fired over the past 10 days at U.S. or Iraqi forces, the Marine general overseeing U.S. troops in the city said Tuesday.

About 140,000 residents have been allowed past checkpoints between the city and the town of Samarra, said John Sattler, commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, said from Iraq in a teleconference with reporters at the Pentagon. Some have left again because of damage to their homes, but he lacked figures on how many.

"We're seeing more lights on every night," he said. "We're starting to see commerce reappear on the streets."

Fallujah had about 300,000 residents, but most fled before or during the assault on the city in late November that started Nov. 8. To clear out the insurgent presence in the city, a week ago, the office of the U.N. high commissioner for refugees said. About 100 people had returned to the city, but only 10 percent — 8,500 — remained; the rest had left after inspecting their homes.

Still, Sattler portrayed an improving security situation in the city.

Electric power remains a problem, however. Except for hospitals and other essential buildings, where lights are powered by portable generators, it is simply too dangerous to turn on the power with so many downed lines around the city that could injure or kill people, Sattler said. Rewiring the city will take months.

Between 32,000 and 34,000 heads of household in Fallujah will receive \$200 in humanitarian assistance soon, he said, and money to rebuild homes will come later.

He said Fallujah residents will be able to vote in the Jan. 30 national election, but he would not specify where polling sites would be. He said voting locations are being kept secret until just before the election to prevent insurgents from preparing attacks for those sites.

The general also offered rare praise for Iraq's neighbor Syria, a frequent target of criticism from the Bush administration.

Sattler's area of command stretches west from Fallujah to the border with Syria, which has been a crossing point for fighters, money and weapons destined for the insurgency.

"The Syrians have really stepped up on their side of the border," he said, crediting the State Department's efforts with Damascus. He said the Syrians have increased patrols and filled in breaks in a berm that runs along the border.

Iraq likely to push U.S. for withdrawal timetable

Stars and Stripes

The Iraqi government elected Jan. 30 will almost certainly ask the United States to set a timetable for withdrawing its troops. The New York Times reports senior Bush administration officials as saying.

According to the Times, the report also warns that the elections will be followed by more violence, including an increased likelihood of clashes between Shiites

and Sunnis, possibly leading to civil war, the officials said.

This assessment is consistent with other reports over the past six months, including a classified cable sent in November by the Central Intelligence Agency's departing station chief in Baghdad. But the new assessments, from the CIA and the Defense and State Departments, focus more closely on the aftermath of the election, including its potential

implications for American policy, the officials were reported as saying.

The assessments are based on the expectation that a Shiite Arab coalition will win the elections, the officials told the Times. Leaders of the coalition have promised voters they will press Washington for a timetable for withdrawal, and the assessments say the new Iraqi government will feel bound, at least publicly, to meet that com-

mitment.

Such a request would put new pressure on the Bush administration, which has said it would honor an Iraqi request but has declined to set a timetable for withdrawing the 173,000 American and other foreign troops now in Iraq. Officials, including Colin L. Powell, the secretary of state, have said such decisions should be based on security needs, which include training more Iraqis.

Soldiers take to Ramadi streets in election push



A young Iraqi boy watches from an upstairs apartment window as soldiers hand out information about upcoming elections on the streets below.

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO

Stars and Stripes

RAMADI, Iraq — American soldiers are blanketing the streets and shops of Ramadi with information on the upcoming elections, trying to encourage people to vote in a city where security of polling sites is threatened by insurgents.

Winding through the dusty streets of Tammim, a district on the southwest edge of Ramadi, soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry handed out colorful fliers and instruction sheets Tuesday.

Sometimes they were greeted by smiles, sometimes by indifference and sometimes by hostile glares.

"Election information! Go vote," called out Sgt. 1st Class Jeff

ferson Pridgen, handing out fliers in one of Tammim's marketplaces.

"Saddam will not be on the ballot this year," he added with a laugh.

Nearby, Staff Sgt. Ricky Thomas, a 29-year-old scout platoon member from Villa Platte, La., did the same, trying short phrases of Arabic with the people he encountered.

Most people took the pamphlets, nodded or smiled, and put the papers in their pockets or displayed them on tables or shop windows. But the free-election concept is new to many Iraqis.

One man asked soldiers when he would get paid for his vote. Another thought the informational handouts were ballots.

In a small medical clinic, a female staff member — who understood English, but spoke Arabic — wanted to know where the polling stations in Tammim would be. U.S. military officials and the Independent Election Commission of Iraq are waiting to announce that information until a few days before the election, not wanting to give insurgents time to destroy the locations before the vote.

Pridgen, a 42-year-old artillery forward observer-turned civil affairs officer, also used the day to see how well the reconstruction effort was going.

"You can gauge the local economy a lot by the quality of goods people are buying and selling," he said, pointing out markets with fresh fruit and clothing stores with new, brightly colored fabrics and relatively expensive shoes. "A few months back, a lot of it was junk. Now you're starting to



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH GIORDONO/Stars

Pfc. Matthew Thacker, of 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, keeps watch Tuesday as an Iraqi man peers from an apartment window. Soldiers have been handing out election information throughout Ramadi.

see good stuff for sale and nice cars on the street."

Quality and price are relative — Tammim is a largely poor area, with garbage piling on many streets and intermittent electrical and water service. Civil affairs teams have been hiring contractors to fix both problems.

Intelligence officials with the 2nd Brigade say they believe the insurgents have been pumping more men and resources into the Tammim area as signs of progress increase. U.S. troops are expecting more attacks in the district as the election nears, and have patrolled the streets aggressively looking for weapons and fighters. The soldiers are among the 3,500 2nd Infantry Division soldiers sent to Iraq from South Korea last fall.

The soldiers, shadowed closely by armored Humvees, had a few tense moments Tuesday. One visibly angry man in a long purple robe tore the fliers he was handed and immediately tore them apart. Then he followed Pridgen, tearing up the fliers he handed to other people.

"You can tear as many up as you want. We'll be here every day. We'll bring more," one soldier told the man. Another Iraqi man on the street told soldiers the



A soldier from the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry hands out election fliers to Iraqis in the Tammim district of Ramadi.

first man was angry because Americans had killed members of his family.

A few minutes later, a soldier fired warning shots at a vehicle that came too close to the patrol. Civilians in the marketplace ran for cover, but quickly came back onto the streets when it was clear no firefight was going to take place.

E-mail: Joseph Giordono at: giordono@patriotpress.com



Competing election graffiti is scrawled on walls along the streets of the Tammim district of Ramadi.

U.S., Iraqi teams launch offensive

JABALLA, Iraq — Iraqi SWAT teams in training ran down helicopter ramps alongside Marine commandos at dawn Wednesday, launching an election offensive near the so-called "triangle of death" south of Baghdad.

Marines detained 15 Iraqis, including a suspected former Saddam Hussein-era intelligence official, in the raid at crossroad farm houses near Jaballa, 50 miles south of Baghdad, the leader of the raid, Capt. Ted Douglas of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, said. Documents were confiscated, along with 11 AK-47s wrapped in plastic and stored in oil, Douglas said.

Sunni group appeals for release

BAGHDAD — An influential Sunni Muslim group on Wednesday appealed to insurgents to release hostages on the occasion of a major Islamic holiday which begins this week.

The Association of Muslim Scholars, a body of Sunni clerics, asked guerrillas — most of whom are Sunnis — and other groups that may be holding captives to release them on the Eid al-Adha feast that began Tuesday.

"On the occasion of Eid al-Adha, the Association of Muslim Scholars appeals on parties who hold hostages to free them as an expression of goodwill. Our religion does not accept such acts that lead to killings and humiliation," said Omar Raghib, a spokesman for the group.

From wire reports

Attacks, resignations could halt vote

BY HAMZA HENDAWI

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Only a sustained onslaught by insurgents or the mass resignation of electoral workers will prevent this month's national elections from going ahead, the chief U.N. election adviser in Iraq said Tuesday.

Still, with just two weeks to go before the Jan. 30 vote, Carlos Valenzuela acknowledged that intimidation of electoral workers by guerrillas seeking to derail the balloting is "high and very serious."

An insurgency led by Sunni Muslim militants has recently stepped up its campaign to stop the vote, slaughtering electoral workers, blasting designated polling stations with mortar fire and assassinating candidates. Insurgents also have attacked the U.S.-trained Iraqi police and security personnel who are to guard the polls.

The landmark election is for a 275-seat legislature whose primary task will be to approve a new government and draft a permanent constitution. Iraqis also are going to the polls to elect

local councils for the country's 18 provinces. And in the three autonomous Kurdish regions in northern Iraq, voters will choose a regional, 111-seat assembly.

The massive scale of the elections leaves insurgents with no shortage of potential targets. About 140,000 polling workers will be on duty on election day. There are more than 7,000 candidates running for the National Assembly. If one counts those competing for seats in the Kurdish house and on provincial councils, the total number of candidates jumps to 19,000.

Valenzuela warned that a frenzy of bloodletting would likely cause election workers to abandon their jobs in droves, making a vote impossible.

"We are hoping that this won't happen," said Valenzuela, a Colombian who has involved in 14 other elections around the world.

"The intimidation of electoral workers has been quite high and very serious," he told a small group of reporters in Iraq's electoral commission offices inside Baghdad's Green Zone, a heavily fortified area housing the U.S. Embassy and offices of the Iraqi interim government.

"Nevertheless, there has been very little mass resignations [of electoral workers]," he said.

Valenzuela said the election commission has thus far had no problem replacing those who have quit.

Last week, however, the U.S. general in charge of security in northern Iraq said virtually every election worker in Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city, and the surrounding Ninevah province had resigned.

Brig. Gen. Carter Ham didn't know how many workers there were to begin with, but told reporters that at one point there were essentially none left, forcing an election coordinator to scramble to find replacements.

Valenzuela said only three election workers quit in Mosul. He said he had no figure for the number of resignations nationwide, but insisted it was in the dozens rather than hundreds or thousands.

Already, violence has prevented electoral workers from registering voters in the provinces of Anbar and Ninevah, but to insurgent hotbeds like Fallujah, Ramadi and Mosul. Voters from the two provinces will be allowed to register and vote on the same day.

Abductions cause China to warn citizens to avoid Iraq

The Associated Press

BEIJING — China on Wednesday warned its public to avoid traveling to Iraq, as diplomats tried to win the release of eight Chinese laborers abducted by Iraqi insurgents.

"Please don't rashly go to Iraq, in order to avoid unforeseeable incidents," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The eight abducted Chinese, including two teenagers, were shown in a video released Tuesday by insurgents.

The Foreign Ministry said it

had asked for help from Iraqi religious leaders who helped to win the release of other Chinese abducted last year.

The official Xinhua News Agency said Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao were "concerned about the security" of the hostages and had ordered the Foreign Ministry and Chinese Embassy in Iraq to take "effective measures" to rescue them.

The latest abductees are from the southeastern coastal province of Fujian, which sends thousands of laborers each year to the Middle East and elsewhere.

Xinhua identified the eight men — all from Fujian's Pingtan County — as Zhou Sunqin, 18, Zhou Sunlin, 19, Wei Wu, 20, Lin Xiong, 35, Chen Qun'ai, 37, Lin Zhong, 38, Lin Bin, 39 and Lin Qiang, 40.

They disappeared last week while leaving Iraq for neighboring Jordan, Xinhua said.

The insurgent group said the abducted Chinese had worked at American sites in Iraq.

Last April, seven men from Fujian were abducted while visiting Iraq in search of work and were later released unharmed.

Helicopters dodge death to complete missions

By Ken Dilanian

Knight Ridder Newspapers

TAJI, Iraq — The Black Hawk helicopter flew low and fast over the bright lights north of Baghdad, then suddenly the lights were gone. In the darkened cockpit, the two pilots could make out an expanse of date palms through their night-vision goggles.

"Two-point-five kilometers to LZ. Tell him to start the buzz saw," said 28-year-old Capt. Jeremy Loeb, of Hamburg, Pa. In a clearing 50 feet below, an infantry soldier began twirling a chemical light — mimicking a glowing circular saw — to signal his unit's position to the helicopter.

Within seconds, the 10-ton arctic bird hit the ground with a dull thud.

Twelve soldiers who'd been huddling in the darkness sprinted toward it and climbed in one by one. Three minutes later, the Black Hawk took off with an enormous whoosh of dust and soared away, engines whining, giant rotors slapping the air. One of the soldiers, having walked and slept on the cold ground for two days in a hunt for insurgents, let out a whoop of joy.

"This is what it's all about — picking up cold, tired soldiers and bringing them back for hot chow and a shower," said the second pilot, Warrant Officer Josh Muehlendorf, 29, of Houston.

The Black Hawk's four-person crew from the 1st Cavalry Division had just completed a nighttime mission, a routine mission in one of the unheralded corners of the Iraq war. Attack and transport helicopters are being used in Iraq with greater frequency and intensity than at any time since Vietnam.

Over the last nine months in Iraq, 1st Cavalry aviators have



PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/PTT

Army medics at the 86th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad remove an Iraqi patient from a medevac helicopter, Eagle Dustoff 4-1. At right is the crew chief, Sgt. Douglas Study, 23, of Worland, Wyoming. Attack and transport helicopters are being used with greater frequency in Iraq.

had to adapt their tactics to a guerrilla war in urban areas with no front lines. Their predecessor unit saw almost no combat, but as the insurgency spread in 2004 the Cav fought hundreds of air-to-ground gun battles. It's flown more hours in the last nine months than it would in four or five years during peacetime.

It's killed hundreds if not thousands of insurgents, and an unknown number of civilians.

The 54-foot-long Black Hawks, armed with manned machine guns on each door, are used to taxi troops, supplies, civilians and VIPs, and to quickly insert or remove soldiers for raids or assaults. The smaller, nimbler Apache Longbows and Kiowa Warriors, bristling with high-tech rockets and cannons, are in the air 24 hours a day to protect and sometimes rescue ground troops.

Medevac helicopters have evacuated thousands of Americans and Iraqis alike, saving countless lives. The soldiers of the aviation unit at this sprawling base a few miles north of Baghdad love to tell little-publicized tales of medal-winning valor — "real hero stuff," in the words of Col.

James McConville, the Quincy, Mass., native who commands 1st Cav's 4th Brigade, the aviation unit.

Outside the Kurdish regions in the north, Iraq is so menacing that pilots will risk their lives rather than leave a comrade on the ground for even a few minutes to await a pickup by infantry soldiers. While they sometimes drop soccer balls to children, the pilots never leave their fortified command post on the ground, and have almost no contact with regular Iraqis. Insurgent violence has erected a wall of mistrust between the Iraqi people and the American military.

Helicopters fly in pairs, as low and as fast as possible, using no lights at night. Pilots have learned not to hover for even a few seconds, to avoid giving insurgents a target. Those tactics were a marked change for Apaches, which were built to hover high above the earth in large formations behind advancing ground forces and launch Hellfire missiles at enemy tanks, as they did in the Persian Gulf War.

During the March 2003 invasion, the old methods led to an Apache being shot down and two pilots captured.



AP

This is a picture released by a British Court Martial allegedly shows Lance Corporal Mark Cooley simulating a punch to an Iraqi detainee. The photo was used in the courts-martial for three British soldiers from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers who are charged with mistreatment of detainees in Iraq.

Iraq prisoner abuse condemned by Blair

By Robert Barr

The Associated Press

LONDON — Prime Minister Tony Blair said Wednesday the military would not tolerate any abuse of Iraqi prisoners as new graphic photos depicting alleged mistreatment of detainees blurred across the front pages of British newspapers.

The photos emerged during the courts-martial of three British soldiers charged with abusing prisoners. Some of the pictures show a bound Iraqi being dangled over a loading dock by a forklift and two Iraqis strapped and forced to simulate sexual acts together.

"Everyone finds those photographs shocking and appalling and there are simply no words to describe them," said Blair.

"The vast majority of those 65,000 British soldiers who have served in Iraq have done so with distinction, with courage and with great honor to this country. Whilst we express, in a unified way I know, our disgust at those pictures, I hope we do not allow that to tarnish the good name fully deserved of our British armed forces."

Newspapers on Wednesday raised concerns that the photos could be as damaging as the graphic images of mistreatment of detainees by U.S. forces at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad.

Charles Kennedy, leader of the opposition Liberal Democrats, said the photos were "liable to increase the difficulties and dangers for our existing troops, our good and honorable troops, within Iraq."

The photos were released by the military court at a British base in Osnabrueck, Germany, where the three soldiers are on trial. The alleged mistreatment happened as British soldiers sought to re-establish order amid rampant looting in southern Iraq in spring 2003 after the U.S.-led invasion.

Lance Cpl. Darren Larkin, 30, pleaded guilty Tuesday to one count of battery after prosecutors alleged he was the man shown in one photo standing with both feet on a tied-up Iraqi lying on the ground.

Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, 33, and Lance Cpl. Mark Cooley, 25, pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Witness: British knew of abuse

The Associated Press

OSNABRUECK, Germany — British military lawyers had to remind commanders in Iraq to prevent assaults on detained civilians after getting several reports of abuse, a witness testified at the court-martial of three soldiers Wednesday.

The alleged mistreatment happened as British soldiers sought to re-establish order amid rampant looting in southern Iraq in the spring of 2003 after the U.S.-led invasion.

"A number of allegations were made that these people were not being treated as they should be," the witness, British military law-

yer Lt. Col. Nicholas Mercer, told the court at a British base in Germany. "We had heard of problems."

Defense lawyers sought to argue that the three soldiers didn't have enough guidance about dealing with common criminals as the army shifted from war to policing duties.

They argued the defendants acted under orders, after the camp's commander allegedly issued a directive — known as Operation All Baba — to make captured looters "work hard."

Prosecutors have called the order unlawful, a point also raised by the lawyer for Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, the highest-ranking defendant.

Explosive collection in Afghanistan

Recovered arms pile up in Herat

BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY

Stars and Stripes

HERAT, Afghanistan — Between the majestic snow-capped mountains of the Band-e Baba Range and the historic city of Herat, in western Afghanistan, looms a powerful menace of man's making.

"If this went off," Mark Holroyd said, "all the windows in Herat would probably shatter."

Not every household in Herat has windows, but the observation is enough to make even the coolest of the cool sweat at the thought.

Holroyd, an explosive ordnance technician for Ronco Consulting Corp., calls it "the biggest open-air arms cache in the world." There are about 8,000 tons of explosives — an estimate he characterizes as conservative — on the ground and under 24-hour guard. Much more was here, and much more is expected to arrive in the coming months.

The cache is the result of a United Nations program, with U.S. military assistance, to disarm the warring militias in western Afghanistan. Dubbed Task Force Saber, the effort began in August and by October tons of ammunition started being consolidated in a field east of Herat.

"When I first came here," Holroyd said as he stood near the cache, "it was the scariest place I had ever seen."

Much of the ammo came from the town's 700-year-old citadel, controlled by Ismail Khan, the regional warlord who is now a minister in the Afghan government. The storage site, estimated to be three to four acres in size, includes a wide array of arms, from bullets to 1,000-pound bombs. Crates and other containers include the stuff was manufactured in the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, the United States and a handful of other nations.



PHOTOS BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY/Stars and Stripes

Mark Holroyd of Ronco Consulting Corp., a commercial firm hired by the United Nations, and U.S. Army Capt. Chris Kennedy survey a pile of 1,000-pound bombs at a munitions storage site outside of Herat, Afghanistan. The ammunition, estimated to be at least 8,000 tons, will either be destroyed or turned over to the Afghan National Army for use. The cache is believed to be the largest open-air storage site in the world.

The team assembled to handle the ammo sorts it out and then determines what the Afghan National Army can use and what should be destroyed. Every day, Holroyd said, the team blows up roughly 70 tons of ammo. Since more is still being turned in, Holroyd figures the job will take about a year.

One of the U.S. soldiers involved in the program is Capt. Chris Kennedy of the 25th Infantry Division, based in Hawaii.

"I did something close to this in Bosnia," Kennedy said, "but never to this magnitude. This is five times the size that I saw in Bosnia."

Those who see it for the first time are amazed at such a sea of destructive power.

"I wish I had my camera," Spc. Dean Brazzell, 151st Infantry Battalion, Indiana National Guard, said as he climbed a small hill to get a better look.

Largely absent from the cache are AK-47 rounds and rocket-propelled grenades.



"If this went off, all the windows in Herat would probably shatter."

Mark Holroyd

Explosive ordnance technician

"That's disturbing," said Army Col. Randy Smith, head of the Regional Command East Area Group-West, "because that's the weapon of choice for terrorist activities."

Still, Smith is pleased with the results so far, though he admits: "We don't think we've scratched the surface yet."

E-mail Kevin Dougherty at: doughertyk@mail.strips.com

Weapons turnover resumes in valley

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Officials have resumed collecting weapons from a powerful Afghan faction after an arson attack and an attempted bombing that targeted the disarmament program, the United Nations said Wednesday.

Three small bombs were found last week on vehicles being used to collect tanks, armored personnel carriers and other weapons from the Panjshir Valley, north of the capital, Kabul, the U.N.-run Afghanistan's New Beginnings Program said. A day later, two heavy cranes and a truck were sent on fire.

It didn't say who exactly was suspected in the attacks, or the extent of the damage, but the program was moving ahead after community leaders and local officials pledged to "respect the work of the heavy weapons team and protect them from any criminal attacks."

Officials began collecting weapons on Jan. 9 from the Panjshir, the mountain stronghold of famed anti-Taliban and anti-Soviet commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, the last leg of a drive to gather all the heavy weapons in Afghanistan and draw a line under its violent past.

The valley was a key base for Shura-e-Nazar, a faction dominated by the late Massoud's fellow ethnic Tajiks at the core of the Northern Alliance which helped the United States drive out the Taliban more than three years ago.

Massoud's political heir, Mohammed Fahim, was dropped as Afghanistan's defense minister last year after being accused of dragging his feet over disarmament.

The collection program runs alongside a belated plan to disarm some 40,000 to 60,000 militia fighters to make way for the country's new, American-trained national army.

Karzai asks for NATO help during spring elections

BY WARD SANDERSON

Stars and Stripes

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has asked international peacekeepers to provide security for his country's spring parliamentary elections, though it's unclear when exactly they will take place.

"During our elections, ISAF provided protections for voters," Karzai was quoted as saying in a news release, referring to NATO's International Security Assistance Force. "I am sure that same security will be provided for the parliamentary elections."

Initially, they were to take place concurrently with October's presidential elections, which Karzai handily won, but the second election was rescheduled for April because of security worries. The date didn't stick because of rules governing how soon the country's electoral landscape

must be mapped prior to an election.

International officials nonetheless said they expect the elections will happen in April or May.

For its part, NATO said it would provide security as it did during the presidential balloting. But it is not involved in the scheduling.

"This is not NATO's call to suggest the timing," said an alliance spokeswoman in Brussels, Belgium, under customary condition of anonymity. "We would accept whatever the government decides, together with the United Nations."

The spokeswoman said she did not know whether American troops will be directly

involved with the NATO election mission, but some U.S. troops did work with the ISAF during October's presidential voting. Most of the Americans work under Operation Enduring Freedom, which focuses on hunting down terrorists but also engages in reconstruction work.

"The United States are the leading nation for the OEF mission," the alliance spokeswoman said. "They had a lot of troops there [for presidential elections]."

A spokesman at the alliance's military headquarters in Mons, Belgium, U.S. Air Force Capt. Virgil Magee, said he was unsure how many Americans might be on election duty.

Last year, as many as 1,100 additional U.S. troops from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division deployed to help. That meant about 18,000 Americans served in the country at the time. The alliance sent two additional battalions of about 1,800 troops.



Karzai

The NATO troops primarily are working to keep the capital, Kabul, secure but they have begun expanding into other regions through provincial reconstruction teams.

Karzai has previously called for increasing numbers of international troops in the country. His recent speech to NATO personnel, however, focused on giving tanks for troops there now.

"It is because of your effort that we are where we are today," he said earlier this month. "It is because of the blood of those soldiers shed that this country is more stable and that we have democracy. Our people vote now, but it has not come without a cost. This is something we will remember forever in this country."

"Afghan citizens are once again the owners of Afghanistan and we know how important that is and we are grateful."

E-mail reporter Ward Sanderson at: sandersonw@mail.strips.com



AP photos

Members of the United States Air Force Honor Guard Drill Team twirl their rifles as they perform at Tuesday's "Saluting Those Who Serve" concert that honored members of the armed forces as part of the 55th presidential inauguration in Washington, D.C.

Bush tips his hat to troops

President gives personal thanks to U.S. fighting forces at star-studded event at Washington arena

BY PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — It was bitter cold outside, but servicemen basked in the warmth of praise from their commander in chief as inauguration festivities kicked off in the nation's capital Tuesday.

Taking the stage toward the end of the two-hour "Saluting Those Who Serve" program at Washington's premier sports and concert venue, President Bush told the 7,000-plus troops in attendance that America is indebted to them.

"I can think of no better way to begin [the inauguration] than to celebrate our freedom and to thank those who make it possible,"

Meanwhile, backstage

Kelsey Grammer was on in 20 minutes, and disaster struck. He couldn't find his pants.

Grammer, Dr. Frasier Crane of television's legendary series "Cheers" and the successful spin-off "Frasier," lurched around backstage at the MCI Center with his unique gait, calling out for members of his staff.

"I don't have my pants!" he repeated as several color guard members carrying state flags walked past. "Yes, how are you? Good to see you ..."

Finally, an assistant showed up.

"What size are those? I need 36-33 ..."

Several security members offered their trousers as they looked on.

"Let me have those," Grammer finally told his assistant. They disappeared back into his dressing room. Such is the price for hanging out with stars.

— Pat Dickson

ble." Bush ended the star-studded event by listing the U.S. military's achievements in the global war on terror, including elections in Afghanistan and soon, Iraq. "These are landmark events in

history, and none of this would have been possible without the United States Armed Forces."

Servicemen from each branch, as well as family members and guests, watched as host Kelsey Grammer marshalled mus-

President Bush stands with Capt. Brian Chontosh, center, and Corp. Clayton South, right, at the beginning of Tuesday's "Saluting Those Who Serve" concert at the MCI Center in Washington.

sicians, comedians and special guests who read letters sent home by troops in conflicts from the Civil War to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Country singer John Michael Montgomery had a slightly different take with his song "Letters From Home."

Air Force Maj. Patrick Clements of Epworth, Iowa, who has deployed for operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, said the song has special meaning for those in the field.

"That song hits home. It hits home hard. Until you've deployed, you just have no idea ..."

"Saturday Night Live" impressionist Darryl Hammond was on hand, and noting how he loved being surrounded by thousands of troops, dared a bully he went to sixth grade with to "come kick my ass now!"

Hammond told Stripes backstage why he wanted to be there.

"My dad was in the Korean War, and I'm partial to what they go through. We can't protect ourselves against the bad guys — we depend on them. Think about what we love. College games, the [NFL] playoffs, the World Series — nothing happens without them."

David Letterman appeared in a taped segment with his trademark Top Ten list — signs your commanding officer may be nuts — including No. 5, "Brags he went through basic training with Capt. Crunch"; and No. 1, "Everything stops when 'Oprah' comes on!"

Army Sgt. Phillip Ware, 26, of

Political bug bites Lynn Swann

You heard it here first, folks: Former Pittsburgh Steelers great Lynn Swann says he is planning a run for governor of Pennsylvania.

The acrobatic wide receiver and NFL Hall of Famer won four Super Bowls with the Steelers. He spoke with Stripes backstage as he waited to go on to read a letter from a slave-soldier in the Civil War, writing home to his wife.

Asked what he had to say to readers in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said:

"To all the Pennsylvanians over there, if they're home in 2006: If I run for governor, I want their vote!"

Asked if he was ready to declare his candidacy, Swann would only say that he is "filing paperwork, going through the process."

But he was ready to pick winners for this weekend's conference finals. No surprise here: "Steelers and Eagles. I'll be an all-Pennsylvania Super Bowl!"

— Pat Dickson

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Washington, a radio repairman who said he is deployed in 2006, laughed along, but turned serious when asked about his future. "I have mixed feelings [about deploying] — we have soldiers dying left and right. But I signed

SEE SALUTE ON PAGE 8

IRR delays hold up Army's empty war slots

BY LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Half the Individual Ready Reserves members given orders by the Army to fight the war on terror have not yet received either a delay or an exemption to the order, and Army officials are approving the majority — 66 percent — of the requests.

Hundreds of other IRR members, meanwhile, simply have failed to show up at deployment stations when ordered to do so.

And instead of declaring the scowls as "absent without leave," or AWOL, the Army is choosing to give these people the benefit of the doubt. Lt. Col. Pamela Hart, an Army spokeswoman in the Pentagon, said in a Tuesday interview.

The combination of IRR deferments and no-shows is slowing the Army's effort to fill critical slots in deployment units.

"It would be fair to say there's a delay," Hart said.

Nevertheless, "the [Army] leadership is not alarmed" by the state of the IRR call-up, Hart said.

"We haven't even called the [full] number [of IRR members] we were authorized to call," Hart said.

In January 2004, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said the Army could call up to 6,500 people from the IRR in order to fill empty slots in units mostly bound for Iraq and Afghanistan.

The IRR is a category of servicemembers who have left ac-

tive duty or active reserves service but still have time left on their obligation to serve.

With the intention of minimizing the disruption to civilians no longer in uniform, Army officials said they "scrubbed the lists" of requests to pinpoint 4,402 "absolutely must-fill" positions.

Knowing that not everyone called would make the cut, the same officials decided to send orders to 5,674 IRR members to report for training and deployment, a process that will extend through March 2005.

But attrition is turning out to be higher than Army officials had anticipated.

Of the 3,845 mobilization orders sent to IRR members as of

Dec. 28, 1,919 people requested either a delay or an exemption from the deployment, Hart said. An adjudication board at the Army's Human Resources Command in St. Louis has approved 1,919 of the requests, Hart said.

Only 85 requests have been disapproved, while 576 requests are pending a decision.

Meanwhile, another 452 IRR members who were supposed to report to their mobilization stations before Dec. 28 not only did not contact the board, they did not show up at all.

They failed to report "for varying reasons," Hart said, such as not understanding that they have a legal obligation to do so, or because Army personnel officials "did not have the correct mailing address."

However, the Army "hasn't categorized anyone in AWOL status," Hart said, and is not moving to prosecute or punish any IRR member who did not report as ordered.

Instead, officials in the Army's Human Resource Command "is contacting these 452 people" by phone ... to inform them of their different options, "such as formally to prosecute or punish any IRR member on an exemption or delay," Hart said.

Asked why the Army officials appear to be treating the IRR so leniently, Hart replied, "This is a special group of people."

"We're being compassionate with this group of individuals, and giving them the benefit of the doubt," she said.

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Salute: Troops thought show just 'awesome'

SALUTE, FROM PAGE 7

up for this, and sometimes, like a running back, you gotta square your shoulders and charge into the line."

Navy Corpsman Neath Williams, 23, of Bowling Green, Ky., followed his Marines throughout Iraq last year, including nasty stints outside Baghdad and Nasiriyah. He loved the event, and pointed out how the Marines stood for the Navy's official song "Anchors Aweigh" and laughed when various services roared when they were mentioned.

"It's pretty amazing to see all the guys from the different services. And we get to see the president. It's pretty awesome!"

Marine Sgt. Levi Halford, 23, of Orlando, Fla., who teaches field communications to officers at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia, was nervous at first about coming.

"It seemed like a good place to attack, the inauguration, but it's an honor to be here."

Halford was in Afghanistan with the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, and was somewhat less enthusiastic than the president about our successes there.

"It's gonna be many years before I can stand on its own two feet."

Some of the people on stage read historical letters home. Others, including the president's father, George H. W. Bush, read their own.

One such person was Lt. Kathy McDonny Zeller, an Army Reserve nurse, who read a letter she wrote from Afghanistan last April.

"Soldiers here become frustrated that Afghanistan isn't mentioned more often on CNN. They feel people think they are fighting 'last year's war' and that they are being forgotten."

Clements worried about that same thing.

"I just want to tell [those deployed] 'Thank you.' And I'll be back. Keep the torch warm."

E-mail Pat Dickson at: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil



Singer Hilary Duff performs at Tuesday's pre-inaugural event "America's Future Rocks Today — A Call to Service" youth event at the armory in Washington, D.C.

Duff goes extra mile for military families

BY BRIAN BOWERS

Stars and Stripes

Amid the preteens squealing to the beat at Tuesday's "America's Future Rocks Today" concert were 16 military family members invited by pop singer Hilary Duff.

The pre-inaugural event, featuring a constellation of pop stars and a visit by President Bush, was a flashy break for children whose parents have been deployed six to nine months each year since 9/11, said Patricia Driscoll, president of the Armed Forces Foundation, which helped arrange for the concert tickets and meet-and-greet session.

Duff typically invites 30 to 100 military family members to her concerts because she wants to help troops and encourage their families. "I think that it was something that we wanted to do to give back," she said Monday.

Duff also has visited wounded troops at military hospitals, including a stop at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., earlier this week.

"I have so much respect for them," she said. "They make me feel so grateful ... They are truly heroes."

Such celebrity events grab attention for the Armed Forces Foundation but its biggest efforts touch individual families. Driscoll estimates it has helped about 10,000 military families since the war on terrorism began.

The foundation's efforts range from fishing events to helping families cope with the trauma of combat wounds. Driscoll said.

A major initiative helps families pay hotel bills during time spent with hospitalized troops.

Marine Lt. Col. Jim Byrne, who has worked with wounded Marines at Bethesda, said the foundation has paid for a block of rooms at the base's Navy Lodge for visiting family members.

"It's very helpful for these Marines to have their family members to help them get better," Byrne said.

E-mail Brian Bowers at: bowersb@stripes.osd.mil

Possessing andro now against the law

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Throw out those androstenedione products right now; as of today, they're illegal to own.

As of Thursday, federal regulators are classifying the pro-hormone androstenedione as a schedule III controlled substance, meaning purchase and possession of the body-building product is permitted only with a doctor's prescription.

Department of Defense officials said any servicemember caught with the chemical will be in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Androstenedione supplements, which produce extra testosterone when ingested, have been available over the counter for years as a way to increase muscle mass, and gained extra attention after Mark McGwire admitted to using the pro-hormone during his record-setting 1998 baseball season.

But Col. Vincent F. Carr, the Air Force's chief consultant for internal medicine services, said the classification change of the drug reflects the dangerous side effects federal regulators have discovered in the last few years.

"It's the classic symptoms of too much testosterone. In men, it's too much aggression, blood pressure increase, cholesterol increase, increased likelihood of coronary disease, and testicular atrophy," he said. "The female problems are things like male pattern baldness and hypertension, as well as the blood pressure and coronary disease."

Androstenedione is available by prescription, but Carr called that merely a classification issue. He said no doctor would prescribe more than 20 mg of the chemical, and that is too small an amount to produce muscle-building results.

Carr said he does not anticipate the new ban creating any significant problems for troops. Military exchanges across the globe phased out the last of their andro products more than a month ago, and Carr said he hasn't heard many recent reports of andro use or abuse.

"We still get folks once in a while who buy it and use it, but for the vast majority of the military it isn't an issue," Carr said. "Once the word got out that these things were problems, many just stopped using them."

E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

Some Nebraska veterans losing state benefits

LINCOLN, Neb. — After serving in Operation Desert Storm, Michael Chavez left the Army in 1991 with a general discharge.

Several times since his return to Shelton in southern Nebraska, the concrete worker has received state veterans aid to help pay rent and utilities. But in October, when he went seeking help with rent, he was denied because he did not have an honorable discharge.

Chavez, 39, is among an unknown number of veterans in Nebraska with general military discharges who are caught in the middle of a change in state policy that has kicked them out of benefits and programs they had access to in the past.

To qualify under federal law for benefits such as property tax exemptions, admittance to veterans homes and emergency financial aid, veterans are required to have been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, which includes general and honorable discharges.

Most states use similar language, but not Nebraska. Nebraska law says to receive state benefits a veteran must have an honorable discharge or its equivalent.

From wire reports

AF plane collides with crop-duster

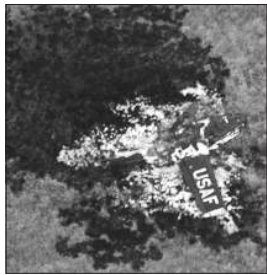
The Associated Press

FREDERICK, Okla. — An Air Force training jet and a small plane collided Tuesday over southwestern Oklahoma, killing the plane's pilot, authorities said. Both military pilots parachuted to safety.

The T-37 training jet from Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, struck the private plane over a rural area southeast of Frederick, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman John Clabes said. By mid-afternoon, the crash site had been cordoned off by military personnel.

The two military pilots suffered only minor injuries after parachuting to the ground. A base spokesman said he did not know what caused the collision, which happened at about 5,000 feet. The National Transportation Safety Board was to investigate.

The dead pilot was identified by Air Tractor as Dierk Nash, 43, the owner of a flying service in Wheatley, Ark. The Air Force pilots were identified as Capt. Christopher S. Otis and 2nd Lt. Roderick V. James. Officials did not release their ages or hometowns.



THE OKLAHOMAN, KWTW NEWS/AP

The remains of an Air Force jet that collided with a crop duster plane is seen in a field near Frederick, Okla., on Tuesday.

Citadel president to retire in August

The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — John Grinalds, who as president of The Citadel helped the state military college move forward after its tumultuous fight over the admission of women, said Tuesday he is retiring as of Aug. 1.

Grinalds, 67, a retired Marine major general, came to the school in August 1997 when it was routinely in the national headlines be-

cause of its fight to women from joining its formerly all-male corps of cadets.

"With the tireless work of many people, especially those who have been in the corps of cadets since 1996, we have arrived at the point where the corps of cadets is coeducational and all students, regardless of gender, are considered cadets, period," Grinalds said.

There are now more than 120

female cadets at the military college.

In addition to Grinalds' departure, command Ensign Mace, whose daughter was the Citadel's first female graduate, said earlier this month that he wants to retire. Mace has been third in command at the school for eight years.

The college's Board of Visitors has begun the search for a new president.

Military academy applications drop

By DOUGLASS DOWTY

McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — Matt Arreola of Visalia hails from the post-9/11 generation.

The Navy midshipman entered a U.S. military academy in the aftermath of the attacks on Washington and New York. He and his wartime cohorts are cognizant of the messy conflict in Iraq that rages with no end in sight.

"The reality that our friends and leaders may give their life sometime in the next couple of years is a sobering feeling," Arreola said.

Yet Arreola's class may also mark the peak of post-attack patriotism. Incoming U.S. service academy applications for the Class of 2009 are down precipitously from the year before. This marks the first time since 9/11 that academy applications have dropped.

At West Point, applications as of mid-January are down 16 percent compared to the same time last year. The Air Force Academy has seen a 28 percent drop this year from the total pool a year ago with about two weeks left in the admissions cycle. The Naval Academy is experiencing a similar fall-off.

"We did see a spike in applications immediately following 9/11 — which we attributed to the outpouring of patriotism as a result of the acts of terrorism on American soil," said West Point spokesman Maj. Mike D'Aquino. "Our applicant pool numbers are now in line again with pre-9/11 applications, so we believe the initial spike has ended."

Military academy admissions pose some unusual hurdles for applicants; including, for many, the necessity of obtaining a recommendation from a member of Congress.

While applications at service academies have declined since 2002, the numbers of qualified candidates have actually increased, suggesting a crop more focused and determined on military service, not academics.

The acceptance rate at West Point was higher in 2004 than any other point in recent history. D'Aquino asserted that "those who are applying are applying because they want to enter [West Point] and become a commissioned officer to lead our nation."

At the Air Force Academy, the number of applicants dropped by 24 percent during the past two years, even as the number of those considered qualified rose 4 percent.



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IN THE WORLD

Indonesia declares 70,000 more deaths

The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesia's Health Ministry on Wednesday declared as dead more than 70,000 people previously listed as missing, significantly raising its estimate for the death toll from last month's tsunami.

If confirmed, the Health Ministry count would bring the number of dead in Indonesia to 166,320 — and the overall toll in 11 countries to as many as 221,000 dead from the Dec. 26 disaster.

But the ministry's number differed sharply from others released by the Indonesian government. The Social Affairs Ministry has been keeping a count that on Wednesday stood at 114,978 dead and 12,132 missing.

The Associated Press has used the Social Affairs Ministry count for its tally of the tsunami dead. The total compiled by AP from governments in each country is at least 162,228 dead.

The United Nations on Tuesday listed the number of dead in the Dec. 26 disaster at 165,493.

Indonesia is not the only country suffering from confusion in the count. In Sri Lanka, the Public Security Ministry and National Disaster Management Center have put out tolls of 38,195 and 30,920, respectively. The AP total is based on the disaster center's number.

Officials have frequently cautioned that compiling accurate figures for the dead or missing is almost impossible, and that a definitive total of dead may never

U.N. calls for united tsunami-alert system

KOBE, Japan — With multiple nations putting forward projects for a tsunami-warning system, the United Nations said Wednesday that it should set up the system and extend it globally, but the United States voiced doubts about the U.N. ability to run such a program.

The Asian tsunami disaster demonstrated with terrifying power the need for an alert system in the Indian Ocean and other parts of the world, but the outpouring of support to build one has generated a plethora of overlapping proposals.

Amid the confusion, U.N. officials at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, called Wednesday for coordination of efforts — and insisted on their own central role in marshaling the expertise and setting up the system.

American officials, however, question the ability of the United Nations to coordinate the program.

The United Nations "has to prove it has the capacity to do so," said Mark Lagon, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state.

— The Associated Press

be reached.

Yusrizal, an official with Indonesia's Health Ministry, said it reached the much higher figure by cross checking numbers



With the help of elephants, a team of salvagers retrieve useful pieces of timber Tuesday from the areas destroyed by last month's tsunami in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

at the a government task force center in Banda Aceh, the central point of relief efforts, and the Home Affairs Department. Like many Indonesians, Yusrizal used just one name.

The ministry gave no breakdown of age or gender of the dead.

On Tuesday, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono ordered his government's various departments to work together to come up with a definitive death toll. Officials in Yudhoyono's office were not immediately available for comment late Wednesday.

Cuba no-smoking rules

HAVANA — Despite its reputation as a producer of fine cigars, Cuba is preparing to ask smokers to step outside before lighting up.

Beginning on Feb. 7, smoking will be prohibited in theaters, stores, buses, taxis and other enclosed public areas under a new resolution published in Cuba's National Gazette by the Commerce Ministry.

Smoking also will be banned in indoor restaurants except in designated smoking areas. Cigarette machines will be taken down.

There was no word if smoking would be allowed in bars.

Israel-Palestinian talks

JERUSALEM — Israeli and Palestinian security officials planned to meet late Wednesday to discuss ways of stopping Palestinian rocket fire in the northern Gaza Strip, Israeli officials said.

The meeting follows a spike in violence in the Gaza Strip, including repeated rocket attacks and an Israeli bombing that killed an Israeli security agent Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had halted contacts with the new Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, after attackers killed six Israeli civilians at a Gaza checkpoint last week. Israel has threatened to carry out a major reprisal, but has so far held off to give Abbas time to take action against militants.

Sharon met with his security Cabinet on Wednesday afternoon.

Participants, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the decision to resume security contacts was made at the meeting.

From The Associated Press

Europeans look to Bush with wary hope

By DAVID MCHUGH

The Associated Press

BERLIN — Many Europeans didn't want a second term for President Bush, but as his inauguration approaches they're warily hopeful for more cooperation with the U.S. leader and his new foreign policy team led by Condoleezza Rice.

Beyond resolving the quagmire in Iraq, the list of issues important to European governments includes the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Iran's nuclear program, climate change and the weak U.S. dollar squeezing European exporters.

Rice's move to the State Department, an upcoming Bush visit to Europe, and an awareness that U.S. presidents sometimes moderate

their outlook in a second term have all raised a sense of modest optimism.

But, Europeans ask, will there now be more willingness to work through multilateral institutions such as the United Nations — something they feel was lacking in the first Bush term when trans-Atlantic relations were often tense?

Rice, whose confirmation hearings began Tuesday, is tied to the Iraq war from the first Bush term and for her widely quoted comment that the United States should "punish France, ignore Germany and forgive Russia" for their opposition to the war.

Europeans are now wondering which Rice will show up as secretary of state: the loyal national security advisor from the time of the Iraq war, or the former Stanford University

provost who co-wrote a book about German reunification and was "the very good friend of Europe," in the words of the German strategic analyst Michael Kolkmann.

There is considerable anticipation for next month's planned Bush trip to Brussels, Germany, and Slovakia, where he is to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin.

What will Bush hear from leaders like Gerhard Schroeder? Reflecting a willingness to put the past behind — and ask for something in return — the German chancellor on Monday dismissed his bitter dispute with Bush over Iraq as "a little bit of history" and called for joint progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

That "can be done only if the United States of America gets involved more strongly in this process," Schroeder said, adding that "Europe has a role and will play that role."

Pilgrims' prayers



Pilgrims pass by fruit vendors as they leave noon prayers at Arafat outside Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on Wednesday. More than 2 million pilgrims headed to Arafat for the annual hajj pilgrimage.

Official: Catholic Church in Spain changes stance on use of condoms

The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — In a substantial shift from traditional policy, the spokesman for the Catholic Church in Spain has said it supports the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS.

"Condoms have a place in the global prevention of AIDS," Juan Antonio Martinez Camino, spokesman for the Spanish Bishops Conference, told reporters after a meeting Tuesday with Health Minister Elena Salgado to discuss ways of fighting the disease.

The Catholic Church has repeatedly rebuffed campaigns for it to endorse the use of condoms

in the fight against AIDS. The Vatican states that condoms, because they are a form of artificial birth control, cannot be used to help prevent the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Martinez Camino said the church's stance was backed by the scientific world. He cited a recent study by experts in the medical magazine *Lancet* that supported the so-called "ABC" approach of abstinence, being faithful to partners and using condoms.

Martinez Camino met the health minister as a representative of the church, though it was unclear whether he was expressing the official view of the church.

IN THE STATES

Protesters plan to greet Bush inauguration

BY MARTHA MENDOZA

The Associated Press

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — While U.S. President George W. Bush's supporters celebrate his inauguration Thursday, thousands of protesters around the United States aim to hit the streets with demonstrations and rallies against the returning administration.

"There are some in this country who are just not in the mood to let the president have his day in the sun," said James Hudnut-Beumler, dean of Vanderbilt University's Divinity School and an expert in protest movements.

Although Bush was met with protesters when he was sworn in in 2001, inaugural protests are rare historically, Hudnut-Beumler said. "Presidents are usually

given an opportunity in their inauguration address to try to claim the affections and interests of the whole nation, including people who didn't vote for him."

But in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle, organizers expect thousands of demonstrators to gather on Thursday for speeches and rallies. In dozens of smaller communities rallies, marches

and demonstrations are also planned. Former Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern is the featured speaker at a demonstration planned for Santa Cruz.

For some demonstrators, the reasons to protest are simple.

"We're objecting to Bush being reinstated as president of the United States. He's illegitimate," said Carol Brouillet of

Palo Alto, Calif., who plans to spend Thursday in downtown San Francisco displaying huge panels of photographs of soldiers killed in Iraq. Brouillet, who believes Bush used the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, as a pretext for an illegal war, has shown the photos at various demonstrations.

Others said they were seeking comfort in numbers. "We don't feel that Bush's supposed mandate represents us.

Maybe this is just therapy for us for feeling helpless and hapless," said veterinarian Paul Makdoun of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

In addition to street protests, some anti-Bush groups are calling for a daylong economic boycott, pressing critics to stay home from work and not spend any money.

Police in many communities said they are prepared for the outcry, and have been working with protest organizers on march routes and other plans.

THE FACE OF WAR HAS CHANGED.



Photo courtesy Soldier Magazine

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President ponders historical documents

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reliving history as he awaited his second oath-taking, President Bush paused amid celebratory galas Wednesday to contemplate America's most treasured historical documents, including George Washington's inaugural speech.

Asked whether he was feeling the history of the moment, Bush said, "Absolutely."

He and Laura Bush studied original versions of the Declaration of Independence so faded that most signatures were illegible, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and Washington's address and Bible.

The sense of history was palpable in the dimly lit, dome-shaped room in the National Archives. A portrait of the Founding Fathers gazed down on the president, his wife and their entourage.

Top presidential adviser Karl Rove said Bush was "focused, upbeat, optimistic" about the job at hand: four more years in the Oval Office, starting Thursday, when he will be sworn in anew for a second term.

"Anybody's who concerned with creating a legacy will fall short if he's not focused ... on the right policy and service to the country," Rove told The Associated Press.

Senate panel OKs Rice as secretary of state

By BARRY SCHWEID

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted Wednesday to confirm Condoleezza Rice as secretary of state after two days of hearings in which she faced strenuous Democratic assaults on the Bush administration's handling of Iraq.

Pending approval by the full Senate, Rice would be the first black woman to hold the job. She was confirmed by a 16-2 vote with Democrats John Kerry and Barbara Boxer voting no.



Rice

ic job. A vote by the full Senate was expected by Thursday.

As the committee voted, Secretary of State Colin Powell bid fare-

well to his "family" at the State Department.

"You were my troops, you were America's troops," the former Army general said. "You are the carriers of America's values."

He called Rice "a dear friend" and said she would bring "gifted leadership" to the department.

Rice surmounted two days of sometimes contentious questioning — mostly by Democrats — on the administration's prosecution of the war.

At her hearing Wednesday, Rice acknowledged "there were

some bad decisions" by the administration on Iraq, as Democrats pressed her on whether the reasons for going to war were misleading.

Rice insisted that Saddam Hussein was a dictator who refused to account for weapons of mass destruction. And it was impossible to change the nature of a terror threat in the Middle East with him leading Iraq, she testified.

But Boxer would not be shaken off, even after Rice acknowledged to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "there were some bad decisions" taken by the

Bush administration on Iraq.

She accused Rice of "an unwillingness to give Americans the full story because selling the war was so important to Dr. Rice. That was her job."

And now, Boxer said, the toll of American dead and wounded is the "direct result" of Bush administration "rigidness" and misstatements.

Biden challenged Rice to acknowledge administration mistakes on Iraq, and said he would vote for her confirmation, but only with "some frustration and reservation."

Calif. executes man for double murder

By DAVID KRAYETS

The Associated Press

SAN QUENTIN, Calif. — Prison officials executed a three-time murderer early Wednesday, making him the 11th inmate put to death in California since capital punishment was reinstated in 1977.

Donald Beardslee, 61, was executed by injection for killing two women in 1981 while on parole for a third slaying. Officials said he did not make a statement.

The execution came only hours after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger rejected a clemency petition seeking to commute the death sentence to life without parole, and the Supreme Court rejected two last-minute appeals.

Beardslee's lawyers claimed he suffered from brain malades when he killed Stacey Benjamin, 19, and Patty Gedding, 23, to avenge a soured \$185 drug deal.

His appeals before the Supreme Court included claims that lethal injection constitutes cruel-and-unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment, and that jurors were unfairly influenced when they rendered the death verdict.

The governor also rejected a request for a 120-day delay of the

execution sought by defense lawyers who wanted the time to reopen the case before a federal court.

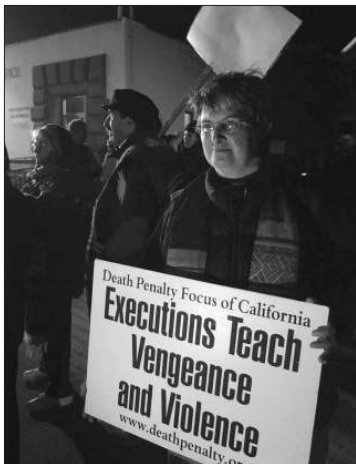
"Nothing in his petition or the record of his case convinces me that he did not understand the gravity of his actions or that these heinous murders were wrong," Schwarzenegger said in a statement. "I do not believe the evidence presented warranted the exercise of clemency in this case."

Beardslee, a machinist, served seven years in Missouri for murdering a woman whom he met at a St. Louis bar and killed the same evening. After being released, he killed Benjamin and Gedding.

No California governor has granted clemency to a condemned murderer since then. Gov. Ronald Reagan spared a severely brain-damaged killer in 1967.



Beardslee



J.D. Benson, right, of Oakland, Calif., holds a sign opposing the death penalty Tuesday night outside of San Quentin State Prison in San Quentin, Calif. Convicted killer Donald Beardslee, an inmate at San Quentin, was executed by lethal injection at San Quentin early Wednesday.

Judge: Suits can't pursue Saudi Arabia for 9/11

By LARRY NEUMEISTER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Saudi princes and several Saudi financial institutions were dismissed as defendants in six civil lawsuits accusing them of providing support to al-Qaida before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Judge Richard Casey said Tuesday that the president, not the courts, has the authority to label a foreign nation a terrorist, though he said he understood the "desire to find a legal remedy for the horrible wrongs committed on Sept. 11, 2001."

The lawsuits alleged more than 200 defendants provided material support to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida. Defendants included al-Qaida, its members and associates, charities, banks, front organizations, terrorist organizations and financiers who allegedly supported al-Qaida.

The judge said the plaintiffs failed to provide sufficient facts to overcome the kingdom of Saudi Arabia's immunity. He said Saudi Arabia maintained it has worked with the United States to share information in the fight against terrorism.

He also noted the State Department has not designated the kingdom a state sponsor of terrorism, and that the Sept. 11 commission found no evidence Saudi Arabia — the birthplace of bin Laden and 15 of the 19 hijackers — funded or supported the Sept. 11 terrorists.

The judge also dismissed as defendants Saudi defense minister Prince Sultan, Saudi ambassador to London Prince Turki and Prince Mohamed Al-Faisal Al-Saud, among others.

"The court has reviewed the complaints in their entirety and finds no allegations from which it can infer that the princes knew the charities to which they donated were fronts for al-Qaida," Casey said. "Here, there are no

such factual bases presented, there are only conclusions."

The judge permitted lawsuits to proceed against the Saudi Binladin Group, the successor to a construction company founded by bin Laden's father, which is now one of the largest engineering and construction companies in the Arab world.

He said additional legal discovery would be necessary to decide whether the Saudi Binladin Group "purposefully directed its activities at the United States."

Among financial institutions dismissed as defendants were Al Rajhi Bank, which has nearly 400 branch offices throughout Saudi Arabia; Saudi American Bank, the second largest bank in Saudi Arabia; and Arab Bank, which has headquarters in Egypt with branch offices throughout the world.

Casey said he found no basis for a bank's liability for injuries resulting from attacks funded by money passing through it on routine banking business.

Poe remembered by fan

BALTIMORE — The mystery man was dressed for the cold rather than tradition, and some spectators were not quite as respectful as in years past.

But for the 56th year, a man stole into a locked graveyard early on Edgar Allan Poe's birthday and placed three roses and a half-empty bottle of cognac on the writer's grave in Baltimore.

Jeff Jerome, curator of the Poe House and Museum, who has seen the mysterious visitor every Jan. 19 since 1976, gathered with about 20 people Tuesday night to glimpse the ritual in sub-20 degree temperature.

No one, not even Jerome, knows the identity of the so-called "Poe Toaster." This was first documented in 1949, a century after Poe's death.

This year, some spectators entered the locked cemetery, others confronted Jerome and asked the stranger left and demanded that he reveal his identity.

Columbine-like plot

BROCKTON, Mass. — A teen accused of plotting a Columbine-style massacre at Marshfield High School was freed on \$20,000 bail after a judge ruled he posed no threat to the community.

Judge Suzanne DeVecchio ordered Joseph Nee to stay away from all Marshfield schools and school-related activities. She also set a 9 p.m.-to-6 a.m. curfew, ordered him to finish his senior year with tutors and to undergo random drug tests.

D.C. standoff ends

WASHINGTON — A man threatening to blow up his van waged a standoff with authorities a short distance from the White House on Tuesday, triggering the evacuation of several blocks of downtown on the first day of inaugural activities.

The man, who ended peacefully about four hours later, did not appear to be related to terrorism or the inauguration but instead was a 30-year-old man, authorities said. The response — hundreds of officers, armored vehicles, snipers on rooftops, instant road closures — underscored the tight security in Washington.

The man, whom police identified Tuesday night as Lowell Timmers, 34, of Cedar Springs, Mich., about 20 miles north of Grand Rapids, was charged with violating a federal law that prohibits "any threat to do harm or damage with a gun or explosives."

From wire services

Insanity defense likely at stolen baby trial

BY KEVIN MURPHY
AND KAREN DILLON
Knight Ridder Newspapers

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Five times she faked pregnancies. At least once her stomach grew hard and large like an expectant mother's, even though she was incapable of having children.

Desperate for a child, she killed an expectant mother and stole her baby, according to a grand jury indictment.

Now, a jury may have to decide whether Lisa Montgomery was insane or should be held responsible for her alleged actions.

Montgomery is accused of strangling Bobbie Jo Stinnett in Skidmore, Mo., last month and cutting her fetus of eight months from the womb.

Montgomery, of Melvern, Kan., will be

Kansas woman is accused of strangling Missouri mom, cutting fetus out of womb

arraigned Thursday, and lawyers and psychiatrists said pleading not guilty by reason of insanity may be her only hope. She confessed to the killing, according to an FBI affidavit.

U.S. Attorney Todd Graves said last week that Montgomery could pursue an insanity defense if she pleads not guilty. If she is found guilty, she could try an insanity defense again during the penalty phase. Graves is considering seeking the death penalty.

Montgomery's public defenders declined to comment. While she is expected to plea Thursday, an insanity defense would be de-

cided at a later date. Defendants found not guilty by reason of insanity normally are confined to mental institutions.

A study by the American Psychiatric Association showed that defendants found not guilty by reason of insanity tend to spend as much or more time in custody as those convicted and sent to prison.

The insanity issues in Montgomery's case likely would include her history of phantom pregnancies, the gruesome nature of the crime and premeditation, lawyers contacted about the case said.

Federal law states that insanity is a defense if the "defendant as a result of severe

mental disease or defect was unable to appreciate the nature and quality or the wrongfulness of his acts."

Montgomery's psychological history and her state of mind at the time of the crime would be evaluated, said Saul Faerstein, a Beverly Hills, Calif., forensic psychiatrist.

If she is found to have committed the crime, Faerstein said, the jury will weigh questions such as "What was she thinking when she did it and did she understand the wrongfulness of what she was doing by trying to cover up what she was doing?"

"The assumption is that a person has to be 'somewhat deranged' to murder by their own hands, Faerstein said. But being deranged doesn't mean a killer meets the high burden of legal insanity, he said.

Insanity pleas are rare, with various studies showing that fewer than 1 percent of defendants use them.

NASA determines rover found meteorite on Mars

BY JOHN ANTCAK
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — NASA's Opportunity rover has determined that a strange bubbly rock on the surface of Mars is actually a meteorite, offering a new clue into how the martian surface is made and remade.

Scientists are not so much interested in the meteorite itself. Rather, they want to see if other objects nearby also are meteorites and how martian winds are reshaping the planet.

If sand is continuously blowing in and being deposited on the surface, burying things and building up terrain over time, meteorites will be covered and few will be seen, rover mission scientist Steve Squyres said Tuesday.

But if fine surface material is being continuously stripped away by the wind, coarse things such as meteorites will be left behind and their accumulation will show.

"So whether you're seeing a net accumulation or a net burial of

the meteorites is going to tell you something about what the erosion or deposition rates are out on the plains," Squyres said.

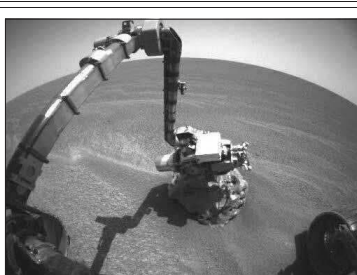
Opportunity landed Jan. 24 on the Meridiani plains, halfway around the planet from where its twin, Spirit, set down in the Gusev Crater region on Jan. 3, 2004.

Opportunity, a six-wheeled robot geologist, quickly discovered rocks showing that its area of Meridiani was once soaked in water, the major scientific finding of the twin-rover mission. After that, it explored rocks in a deep crater before heading off to give engineers a look at its discarded heat shield.

A strange basketball-sized object nearby stood out immediately.

It looked like nothing seen at their landing site, said Squyres, a Cornell University scientist who is the principal investigator for NASA's Mars Exploration Rovers mission. Scientists suspected it was a meteorite.

"On a mission of exploration, some things you're going to find



In this image released by NASA on Tuesday shows the robotic arm of rover Opportunity investigating a basketball-size meteorite sitting on the surface of Mars, which was discovered last week.

because you went looking for them, you planned for 'em and you did your job right, and sometimes you're just going to get lucky. And this one was just lucky," said Squyres.

Opportunity was then ordered to deploy its instrument arm to confirm if the object was a meteorite. The rover used its brush to

remove dust but didn't grind into the meteorite since it was determined the tool would be no match for the nickel-iron hunk.

Tests on Earth showed that a similar tool's grinding heads would be worn away by the meteorite. "We designed our rock abrasion tool for rock. We didn't design it for nickel-iron alloys," he said.

New N.Y. restaurant

NEW YORK — Workers from the Windows on the World restaurant atop the World Trade Center have signed a lease to create the city's first employee-run restaurant — only a walk from Ground Zero.

The workers, 34 immigrants and one U.S.-born chef, are calling their restaurant Colog. It is set to open in Greenwich Village "as soon as possible," said Marouh Feikak, a Moroccan-born waiter.

Famed for its spectacular views from the 106th floor of the trade center's north tower, Windows on the World was decimated on Sept. 11, 2001. Seventy-three Windows employees died.

Once it opens, the restaurant will not have any visible sign of the terrorist attack that killed more than 2,700 people at the World Trade Center.

Evolution sticker fight

MARIETTA, Ga. — A school board is planning to challenge a federal judge's order to remove stickers in science textbooks that call evolution "a theory, not a fact."

In a 5-2 vote, the Cobb County school board decided to appeal last week's ruling. Board members said U.S. District Judge Clarence Cooper's order to remove the stickers immediately "amounts to unnecessary judicial intrusion into local control of schools," according to a statement.

Waffle House bias suit

ATLANTA — Black customers who say they were discriminated against at Waffle House restaurants in Georgia and Alabama filed federal lawsuits against the chain Tuesday.

The coordinated lawsuits, which join two others filed last week in North Carolina and Virginia, claim servers annoyed they would not serve blacks, deliberately served unsanitary food to black customers and used racial epithets at blacks and became verbally abusive when asked to wait on blacks.

While plaintiffs attorneys said 20 discrimination cases already were pending against the Norcross, Ga.-based company, Waffle House said it has a policy to train workers "to treat all customers equally."

From wire reports

Gambling seniors

Many senior citizens tend to bet large amounts of money or more than they can handle, according to a new study.

Percentage of elderly who said they were involved in at least one gambling activity in the past year



*At-risk: Put more than \$100 on a single bet and/or had bet more than they could afford to lose

Source: American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry

Study: Seniors bet more than they can afford

BY JOHANN LOVIGLIO
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Casino trips and bingo nights may offer retirees a chance for excitement and socializing, but gambling also can prompt elderly gamblers to wager more than they can afford, according to a study.

Problem gamblers who are on fixed incomes often end up in greater peril than younger people who have more years of working to straighten out their debts, said Dr. David Oslin, senior author of the study in the current edition of the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry.

Of the 843 senior citizens interviewed by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and the Penn State College of Medicine, nearly 70 percent said they gambled at least once in the past year.

Of that number, nearly 11 percent fit the researchers' criteria of "at-risk" gamblers — reporting that they plunked down more than \$100 in a single bet, gambled more or that they could afford to lose, or both.

"These seniors who are at risk may not be ready for Gamblers Anonymous, but many of them don't have a lot of money and spending on gambling could mean that they won't have anything left to buy medicines," Oslin said Tuesday.

The researchers gave questionnaires to a random group of patients, age 65 and older, at several primary care clinics. The most popular choices for those who specified a gambling preference were lotteries, playing on gambling machines and going to casinos.

The results suggest older

men are just as likely as men to gamble and develop gambling problems. However, it also indicates that those defined as at-risk gamblers were more likely to be minorities, binge drinkers, or suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder — and they may be less likely to seek help.

"This is a good study because it provides us with an important signal that this is something we need to be on the lookout for," said Dr. Dan Blazer, a professor of psychiatry at Duke University, who was not involved in the research.

Oslin said the study has some limitations — only half of the people who were randomly chosen agreed to participate in the study, and all the respondents were from the Philadelphia region, which is close to Atlantic City, N.J., and may offer easier access to gambling opportunities than other areas. But he believes the data is solid.

OPINION

Harry wears the painful past on his sleeve

BY ANDRES GUMBEL

It has been a while since the word "Nazi" was associated with a member of the British royal family. But obviously it has not been long enough. Last Thursday, London's best-selling newspaper, the *Sun*, splashed a photograph of 20-year-old Prince Harry at a costume party wearing the uniform of Nazi Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps, complete with swastika armband, and the whole of Britain went berserk.

"Complete idiot" was the epithet bandied about by one anti-fascist group, and nobody seemed to think it remotely inappropriate. The president of Britain's Holocaust "Trust" went even further, calling the prince's actions "stupid and evil." The *Sun*'s headline was "Harry the Nazi."

A former armed forces minister suggested that Harry, who is third in line to the throne, was now unfit to enter Sandhurst, Britain's elite officer training school, where he is due to start later this year. And the former commander of British forces in Bosnia, Col. Bob Stewart, said that if one of his men had gone to a party dressed as a Nazi he would have put him on toilet-cleaning duty for two weeks.

It's hardly news that a British royal has made a prize wit of himself. That seems to be the House of Windsor's lot. But this is in a whole different category. Even a 20-year-old (and particularly one in line to the throne) should know that the world is still colossally and understandably sensitive about the Nazis and their monstrous crimes.

After all, the Third Reich came close to ripping apart the fabric of the British monarchy in the 1930s and posed a unique threat to a divided establishment. Had history

jogged just a few degrees one way or the other, Britain could have found itself either allied with Adolf Hitler or overrun by his *Wehrmacht* and turned into a fascist state.

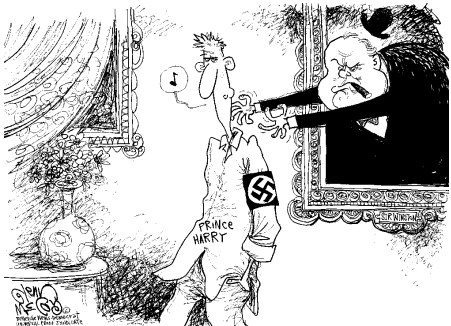
Nobody represented the flirtation with totalitarianism more than Harry's great-grand-uncle, Edward VIII, the ultimate black sheep of the family, who openly sympathized with the Nazis and might have pushed Britain into an anti-Stalinist alliance with Hitler had it not been for his insistence on marrying the American divorcee — and equally ardent Nazi apologist — Wallis Simpson, an insistence that precipitated his abdication in 1936.

For a long time, conventional wisdom had it that the objection to Simpson was religious and moral: that there was no tolerance of divorce in Anglican belief, which Edward, as monarch, was bound to uphold.

Recently released official papers have shown, however, that the establishment was greatly exercised by Simpson's fondness for the Nazis (she was believed to have been Joachim von Ribbentrop's lover when he was ambassador to London), even more vexed about Edward's openly pro-Nazi leanings and anxious to see him stripped of the crown if at all possible. The divorce must have seemed providential.

The reverberations from the abdication crisis are still palpable among today's royals. Three of Prince Philip's sisters married Nazi sympathizers, and the Windsors who succeeded Edward VIII — his brother, George VI, and George's daughter, Elizabeth II — had to live it up, even after the Third Reich's demise.

Edward himself continued to be a severe embarrassment, dining in Germany with Hitler and Rudolph Hess in 1937 and very



possibly (the record is ambiguous) plotting with the Nazis to return to the throne in the event of a successful invasion of Britain.

This is the history that Harry just brought roaring back to life.

The costume party, held at the mansion of the Olympic show jumper Richard Meade, was on a "native and colonial" theme, so, to add insult to injury, Harry's costume revived unpleasant parallels between the Nazi taste for bloodthirsty imperial adventure and Britain's own leanings in that direction — like using poison gas on the Kurds, shooting independence protesters in India and so

on. Britain has long since repented of its imperial sins, but nostalgia still abounds in certain upper-class circles.

Harry has been a mild cause for concern before — accused by his art teacher at Eton of cheating on his A-level exams, caught in a bust-up with a photographer outside a London club. With a reputation as a tearaway, he has spent part of his year before Sandhurst working as a ranch hand in Australia. His father and grandfather must be regretting he didn't stay longer.

Andres Gumbel is the Los Angeles correspondent for the independent of London. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Four more years — closer to what 2020 will bring

WASHINGTON
Four years ago when the newly inaugurated President Bush called on his fellow Americans to "show courage in a time of blessing," he could not imagine the horrors of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks or the demands of war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

David Broder

On this day of his second Inaugural, the only certainty is that the next four years will present challenges as large and unexpected as those of the past.

Supporters and critics can agree that the nation is fortunate that its leader is a man prepared to cope with radically changed circumstances, a person of fixed principles but not one wedded to policies of the past.

In his first term, when many supposed that the clouded circumstances of his election would force Bush into a cautious, minimalist approach to governing, he boldly set out to recast many fundamental institutions and doctrines. At home, he engineered sweeping changes in the scale and distribution of taxes, redefined the relationship of the federal government to local schools, and sponsored the largest expansion ever of Medicare. Policies for the environment, regulation of business, law enforcement and a dozen other fields were turned around.

Abroad, the changes were even more dramatic as Bush cast aside the doctrine of containment for one of pre-emptive action — applied unilaterally and controversially to Iraq. He encouraged an overhaul of the armed forces and he launched a style of di-

plomacy that rattled the teeth of many traditional allies.

Now, armed with a second and larger victory at the polls, his domestic agenda includes changing the Social Security system, reforming energy and immigration policies, reducing the number and scale of civil demand suits, simplifying the tax system and further changing public education.

Ambitious as this seems, the likelihood is that the world stage will demand more from Bush — and provide the sternest tests of his adaptability. Iraq is a bleeding wound on his presidency, a war that growing majorities of Americans have joined the rest of the world in judging a mistake. The future of Iraq is less and less in America's hands...

...a sketch of what else lies ahead can be found in "Mapping the Global Future," a 120-page forecast of world affairs in the next

15 years, published last week by the National Intelligence Council, the CIA think tank.

"The international order," it says, "is in the midst of profound change: at no time since the formation of the Western alliance system in 1949 have the shape and nature of international alignments been in such a state of flux as they have during the past decade. As a result, the world of 2020 will differ markedly from the world of 2004, and in the intervening years the United States will face major international challenges that differ significantly from those we face today. The very magnitude and speed of change resulting from a globalizing world — regardless of its precise character — will be a defining feature of the world up to 2020."

One of the likely developments is the emergence of China, India and perhaps Indonesia as major economic and political pow-

ers, while Japan, Western Europe and Russia cope with the challenges of rapidly aging populations. The rise of Asian powers likely will be abetted by globalization — the rapid spread of technology — and pose a challenge to America's economy.

The hopeful trend of democratization will likely confront opposition in ethnic and identity politics, especially the transnational force of Islamic extremism, and contribute to a "pervasive sense of insecurity."

"The United States increasingly will have to battle world public opinion, which has dramatically shifted since the end of the Cold War," the report says. At another point, it adds, "In the future, growing distrust could prompt governments to take a more hostile approach."

Bush has his work cut out for him.

David Broder is a member of Washington Post Writers Group.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Harsh punishment

AL BIRMINGHAM — A woman angry with her 12-year-old daughter for having sex forced the girl to drink bleach and sat on her until the child died, a police detective said.

The girl's 9-year-old brother was forced to watch the attack. Detective Warren Cotton testified in a preliminary hearing for Tunisia Archie, 31.

Archie is charged with capital murder in the asphyxiation death of her daughter, Jasmine. If convicted, she could be sentenced to death or life in prison without parole.

Cotton said Archie, who has been jailed without bond since shortly after her daughter's Nov. 26 death, told authorities she was disturbed because "her daughter told her that she was no longer a virgin."

She said she poured bleach into Jasmine's mouth and the child vomited. The mother then sat on the girl until she stopped breathing, Cotton testified.

Egg business cracks

NY NEW YORK — America's sole maker of plastic Easter eggs has cracked under the pressure of competition from Asia.

Bleyer Industries Inc., of Long Island, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, saying it has lost too much business to Chinese rivals. The company sold its plants in Hauppauge, N.Y., and Mount Union, Pa. It is keeping one in Peoria, Ill., and is seeking a partner to operate. A Chapter 11 filing allows a company to put off paying its debts while it tries to come up with a recovery plan.

About 250 million of the colorful plastic toys were made every year at the Peoria plant, and were sold by some of the United States' largest retailers — Wal-Mart, Target, and Toys "R" Us.

Alcohol ban considered

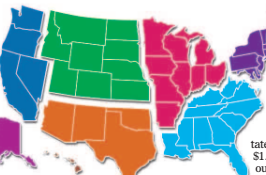
MI EAST LANSING — Michigan State University is considering banning alcohol in most public places on campus. The measure would make exceptions for pre-football tailgating in designated areas. The Board of Trustees will also consider whether to enact permanent tailgating restrictions and specifically outlaw public urination and defecation.

No drowning charges

FL FORT LAUDERDALE — Prosecutors have dropped charges against a mildly retarded teenager once found guilty of drowning a 5-year-old autistic boy, after the state Supreme Court refused to reinstate his manslaughter conviction.

The state had appealed a lower-court ruling that Broward County deputies didn't properly advise Gorman Roberts of his rights during interrogation. Without explanation, the state Supreme Court declined to accept the case on Jan. 7, and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review another Broward County case on the same issue of Miranda rights.

Roberts, now 20, was convicted in 2002 of pushing 5-year-old Jordan Payne into a Pompano Beach canal, where he drowned. Roberts was sentenced to three years in



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

prison, but had been free on an appellate bond.

Families win final battle

OH CLEVELAND — The state will compensate the families of three Ohio soldiers who died in Iraq after determining they were victims of terrorism and not wartime casualties. Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro said the families will receive money tapped from the state's crime victim compensation program. He cited President Bush's declaration on May 1, 2003, that major combat operations in Iraq had ended.

Accredited profs only

AK FAIRBANKS — The University of Alaska-Fairbanks has adopted a policy to recognize degrees only from accredited universities when it comes to decisions of hiring, promotions, tenure or transferring credit. The change was prompted by controversy surrounding former Faculty Senate president-elect Michael Hannigan, who resigned in October amid allegations that his doctorate came from a "diploma mill."

School on probation

RI PROVIDENCE — Mount Pleasant High School was placed on probation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which found fault with the curriculum, the building's condition and other issues, school officials said. Principal Maureen



Clean sweep

Peter Smith, 2, helps clean up straw on the last day of the 89th annual Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, Pa. Peter was a visitor to the fair, not a contestant.

Crisafulli said work is already being done to correct many of the problems, but some are beyond the school's control.

Record land sales

CO ASPEN — Aspen-area real estate sales last year reached \$1.6 billion, breaking the previous record by \$330 million, according to Land Title Co., which handles property title transfers in the area. The previous record for Pitkin County sales was \$1.27 billion in 2000. Prices also soared, increasing to an average of \$1.263 million in 2004, up from \$1.04 million in 2003.

Brawl investigated

AZ TUCSON — The dining hall at an Arizona prison was still locked down for a few days while authorities investigate an inmate brawl that injured three corrections officers.

The fight inside Arizona State Prison Complex-Tucson broke out among several prisoners on the eve of the first anniversary of a hostage standoff at another state penitentiary.

More than 40 inmates barricaded themselves in the dining hall after guards tried to break up the dispute, officials said. They surrendered after guards dispersed a chemical similar to tear gas, said Corrections Department spokeswoman Cam Hunter.

Bodies of 2 recovered

CA UPLAND — Divers recovered the bodies of a 35-year-old woman and a boy believed to be her 7-year-old son from a rushing, rain-swollen creek.

Authorities said Sibihla Flores fell into the creek 45 miles northeast of Los Angeles while trying to save her son, Frank Zavala, who slipped while washing his hands during a Martin Luther King Day picnic.

The creek was moving as fast as 40 mph when they disappeared in front of Flores' husband and 15-year-old daughter, authorities said.

An 11-year-old was believed to have drowned a day before in the same creek after he was swept under by currents moving up to 25 mph, authorities said.

The currents carried Marcelo Bautista into the San Antonio Dam. While a body had not been recovered, authorities believe the boy is dead.

Snowplow kills man

MA WEST BRIDGEWATER — A West Bridgewater man was killed after he was struck by a privately owned snowplow, police said.

Daniel Bellamy, 35, was waiting on the side of the road for his ride to work when a plow operated by a driver for CWB Contractors struck him just after 5 a.m.

West Bridgewater Police Sgt. Victor Flaherty said Bellamy was pronounced dead at the scene.

The driver initially thought he struck a deer because Bellamy was wearing brown clothing, police said.

Investigators do not believe weather was a factor. No criminal charges have been issued against the driver.



High spirits

Kailey Beckwith, 6, gives a high kick for her coach, Danielle Lauzis, during a junior cheerleading clinic at Mark Morris High School in Longview, Wash.



Balancing act

Casey Kilmartin, 6, tries to balance on a large snowball in East Greenbush, N.Y.



Right on track

Matthew Garr, 5, and his sister, Erin Garr, 2, of Lenexa, Kan., ride a vintage antique amusement park train called the Ottaway You-Pump-It (according to the ride operator) at the Great American Train Show in Kansas City, Mo. Robb Garr, the kids' dad, said Matthew is a "train freak." This is the third show Matthew's attended.



Crabs worth waiting for Bell Buoy Crab Co. workers fill totes on the dock at the Chinoek, Wash., plant. The season opening for Dungeness crabs was delayed a month and a half because the crabs were slow to develop. Clockwise from left front to right, workers include Juan Guizar, Matt Culp, James Davis and Dave Caton.



Look who's new at the zoo Tumai, the National Zoo's 4-year-old cheetah, shows off her litter of two male and two female cubs earlier this month. The four cubs, born Nov. 23, make up the first litter of cheetah cubs born at the zoo in Washington in its 115-year history.



Out to graze A horse grazes in a field framed by a barbed wire fence in Larimer County near Loveland, Colo.



Great water for ducks Ducks gather as mist rises from a small pocket of open water on Silver Lake in Virginia, Minn. Discharge from a lake-side power plant keeps a small area of the lake free of ice, providing a place for water fowl to congregate.

Rail tracks damaged

VT BELLOWS FALLS — Freight and passenger train traffic was halted in southern Vermont after a nine-car derailment severely damaged track just north of the Saxtons River. The New England Central Railroad cars were carrying wood products. No one was injured, and the cause wasn't yet known.

Flu shot demand low

GA ATLANTA — About 72,000 additional doses of flu vaccine were distributed this month to private and public health clinics across Georgia, but officials say demand is low. The Division of Public Health is urging people to get shots if they qualify because flu season usually peaks in mid-February. Some clinics and doctors fear they'll have to throw out unused vaccine this spring.

With a song in her heart

IN INDIANAPOLIS — An 82-year-old woman whose lifelong dream was to sing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir has finally added her voice to the group's heavenly crooning.

Virginia Spelbring joined the choir after a group that makes senior citizens' dreams come true helped arrange the grandmother's big singing engagement.

"It was absolutely everything I hoped it would be, and more," she said. "They had three TV stations and the newspaper there. They almost made a star out of me."

Although the choir rarely invites outside singers to join them, leaders of the internationally heralded choir asked Spelbring to sing with their 360-member group after learning about her dream.

Sad end for whales

HI KIHIEI — Maui authorities say a mother pygmy sperm whale that beached herself on Maui was euthanized, while her calf was feared dead. The whales were taken to the Koieie Fishpond at Halepoulo for protection after they were found on the beach at Kealia.

Arrest in smuggling

MI DETROIT — Border agents have arrested a man they say was trying to smuggle 17 Chinese citizens and an Albanian into the United States through an underwater train tunnel that links Windsor, Ontario, to Detroit.

A federal grand jury indicted Wissam Abudayeh, a Palestinian man in his 20s and a legal resident of Canada, on alien smuggling charges.

Abudayeh was to be paid \$400 per person, according to immigration officials.

Authorities say the illegal immigrants boarded a Norfolk Southern engine in Windsor before dawn on Jan. 5 and were caught by U.S. agents during an inspection after the train reached Detroit.

Abudayeh was ordered held without bond until his trial. The 18 immigrants were being held as material witnesses.

Big winner at slots

NV STATELINE — A Pennsylvania man is pretty happy he didn't stop to eat before hitting

the slots here.

Stephen Phares was on a ski vacation when he hit a \$1.3 million jackpot at Harveys Casino and Resort.

Phares, 42, said he wanted to go to dinner but was prodded by a friend to play a progressive Wheel of Fortune MegaJackpot machine.

Now, he said, "I'm very happy we played."

The home mortgage branch manager from Holland, Pa., said he's not sure what he'll do with his winnings.

He said he'd like to invest in Lake Tahoe property. But he also sees his windfall as a chance to help others.

Keeping in touch

MS HERNANDO — Law enforcement agencies in DeSoto County will use federal money to build an electronic link between police departments so officers can share information about arrests, suspects and investigations. The new system can also display where each patrol unit is at any time.

War challenge dismissed

NE LINCOLN — The U.S. Supreme Court dismissed a former Nebraska congressman's lawsuit challenging the Iraq war. Clair Callahan, a Democrat who served in the House from 1965-67, argued that President Bush's military assault on Iraq violated the 1973 War Powers Act. A federal judge ruled earlier that a private citizen has no standing to file such a suit, and that U.S. foreign policy isn't subject to court jurisdiction.

And babies will make 7

MI PETOSKEY — John and Jennifer Dallos have quite a handful with their twins. But things are going to get a lot busier very soon.

Jennifer Dallos is expecting triplets in June.

"We're pretty much shocked," John Dallos said. "We have been up on this cloud, just in a haze. You lay down at night and wonder, 'How are we going to be able to do this?' But you just know it's going to be great."

John and Jennifer Dallos, 31 and 28 respectively, hadn't even planned on having another baby. But they were open to the idea of another child.

"We did have two the first time, so we thought that maybe it wasn't in the cards for us to have more kids," Jennifer Dallos said. "We thought, if it happens, it happens."

Jennifer Dallos did not use fertility drugs.

"When we found out she was pregnant, we thought it would be nice to have another child," her husband said. "We didn't expect to have three."

Gay restriction

AR LITTLE ROCK — Legislators filed a bill to restore a state ban on foster parenting in any household with a gay member.

Sen. Jim Holt, who ran for U.S. Senate on an anti-gay-marriage platform, was a sponsor of the bill to give the state's child welfare board control over "public morality." A recent Pulaski County Circuit Court ruling said the board didn't have that authority.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Fueled up and running

Slowly but surely, New Zealand's Datsuns travel road to success

BY CHUCK MYERS

Knight Ridder Newspapers

The Datsuns understand the value of patience.

The New Zealand rock quartet (bassist/vocalist Dolf de Borst, guitarist Phil Buscke, guitarist Christian Livingstone and drummer Matt Osment) has made slow but steady strides over roughly the past 10 years.

With a reputation for its frenetic, high-powered stage shows, the band began to gain a full head of steam in the past two years on the strength of positive reviews, particularly in the British press, for its self-titled debut album in 2003 and solid sophomore effort, "Outta Sight/Outta Mind" (V2 Records), in 2004.

"On the first record, everything's pretty much foot to the floor," recalled de Borst. "It kind of felt like a singles collection or something like that. Because, in a way, we were doing that. ... But with the second record, there's more songs that we get to do. I think we recorded 14 songs and ended up leaving a couple off, which, I think, actually are amazing songs."

While contemporaries such as The Strokes and The Vines sum-

bled with releases last year, The Datsuns continued to make strides forward. "Outta Sight/Outta Mind" serves up the group's signature music punch infused with musical influences ranging from hard rock and punk to '70s-era glam rock. De Borst noted, for instance, that the group went for a glam edge on the "Outta Sight/Outta Mind" number "You Can't Find Me." Another tune, the thumping "Messing Around," likewise offers a touch of glam, accented by a decided ZZ Top-Texas style bite.

A bit of good fortune shined on The Datsuns as it prepared to work on "Outta Sight/Outta Mind." John Paul Jones, bassist and keyboardist for legendary rock band Led Zeppelin, caught one of the band's shows and offered to assist with producing "Outta Sight/Outta Mind," which The Datsuns accepted gladly.

Jones applied a subtle touch to the album, leaving no hint of an overt Zeppelin footprint on it. If there's aggressive Zeppelin-like thrust to be found anywhere, it is the final track, "I Got No Words," Buscke explained, however, that the song actually derived from a riff the group had toyed with for some time.

"It was kind of like a riff that



Drummer Matt Osment and bassist Dolf de Borst of the rock band The Datsuns let the rhythms rip during a concert in Washington, D.C., in December.

we had around for a long time, and we didn't really know what to do with. We used to just jam with that riff at sound checks and stuff like that."

Originally called Trinket, the group changed its name to The Datsuns after it won a "bottle of the bands" competition in New Zealand in 1997. Each band member soon adopted a Datsun surname, as a way to distinguish themselves from players in other bands with similar names. In 2004, The Datsuns relocated to London to be closer to the music world pulse.

While the band's albums show its musical growth and have enjoyed positive feedback, the group feels more at home on the stage than in the studio.

"I think we've always been a band that comes from performing and playing live to people," observed De Borst.

"And we're kind of making the transition to being both, making it 50-50, which I'll never be comfortable with, because I always kind of believe that performance is the most sort of honest way to playing music and getting it across to people."

Yet the frontman also added that there's still plenty of room for the growth in the studio—but at a deliberate pace set by the group.

"We're still kind of looking to make a record that really defines us, and puts our foot down as not just as really good performers, but as songwriters. ... We've only made two records the whole time we've been together. And usually bands don't even last as long as we have. I think making the next record we'll take a lot more time."

Chefs to cook up fun

Now that celebrity chefs Todd English and Ming Tsai are launching their own reality TV show, they feel free to criticize another one.

Neither liked the NBC show "The Restaurant," which featured celebrity chef Rocco DiSpirito, they said, because it took the fun out of their business.

"A lot of chefs were a little bit miffed because it really portrayed the restaurant business as a negative place to be, which it's not," Tsai said this past weekend. "I mean, the buzz that we get as chefs is like the sports high when you run a marathon."

Their upcoming PBS series "Cooking Under Fire" is a competition that goes to several cities to find someone who could be a cook at a top restaurant—a restaurant, they hope, that's a lot more fun than "The Restaurant."

"It was an attack on our business in a way that I think ... took it down the wrong path," English said. "For some reason, they thought that it would be good TV. I think most people saw through it, and that's why it's not on anymore."

Film rolling without Dylan

Martin Scorsese has been working on a film about Bob Dylan for two years and the singer's one important person he hasn't spoken to about it: Bob Dylan.

"I don't like to deal with the man directly," Scorsese told television critics this



Scorsese

Dylan

weekend. "I'd like to create the story, to find the story, first of all, and then play it out the way I think it's right."

The film concentrates on Dylan's early performing years from 1961 to 1966 and will run this summer as part of the PBS "American Masters" series. Scorsese directed "The Last Waltz," chronicling the final performance of former Dylan backup The Band.

Scorsese has access to 10 hours of fresh Dylan interviews conducted by the singer's manager, and said he may eventually ask Dylan a few questions.

Even then, he can never be quite sure if the always inscrutable Dylan is being up-front or not.

"I'm trying to make as honest a film as possible without unnecessary restrictions," he said. "But I think for me, of course, I'm on his side, so I might come out in terms of a pro-Dylan."

Arts project sputtering

Larry Thompson, whose celebrity clients have included William Shatner and Drew Barrymore, says he'd be willing to help revive a stalled arts project once envisioned as a racially unifying force in the community.

The Larry Thompson Center for Fine Arts, in Clarksdale, Miss., was to have brought blacks and whites together to participate in and enjoy Broadway-caliber productions. But nearly 19 years after the ambitious project began, the building remains in serious need of interior and exterior renovation and serious electrical and air conditioning work, said Mississippi Delta Arts Council board member Marvin Carraway.

"We are working on a process where we are looking for some grant funds to finish renovations," Carraway said.

Its namesake and one-time benefactor, now living in Beverly Hills, left the Delta after graduating with a law degree from the University of Mississippi. Though he hasn't seen the center in several years, he said he's aware the building is not what he had envisioned it to be.

"I have always maintained that I'd be willing to continue to support it if the local community continued to support it, but I don't really have a contact down there to really talk to, nor do I know what they're really doing," Thompson told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

The honor of having the building named after him spurred Thompson to host a

star-studded fund-raiser in 1986, featuring author Alex Haley and actress Donna Mills. But Mayor Henry Espy said the project simply fizzled out.

Thompson said he's still willing to help get the project up and running.

"My name is on it and I would always be willing to help, but it would have to be something that the local community felt that they wanted and would support also," Thompson said.

Blair tea draws \$20K bid

Prime Minister Tony Blair joined high-profile pop stars and British royalty Monday in a radio broadcast to benefit tsunami victims.

Some 270 British radio stations broadcast the 12-hour special, raising more than \$5.6 million.

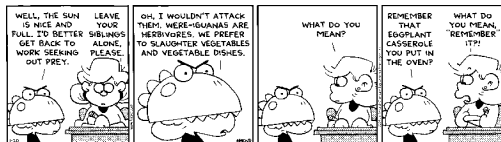
Blair offered for auction a tour of Downing Street and time to join him for a cup of tea.

Bids for the experience reached more than \$20,573. An estimated 26 million people tuned into the broadcast, which featured a live performance by pop star Ronan Keating and talk segments with R&B artist Janelle, Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher and Ozzy Osbourne's wife, Sharon.

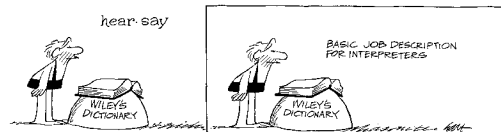
Stories and photos from wire services



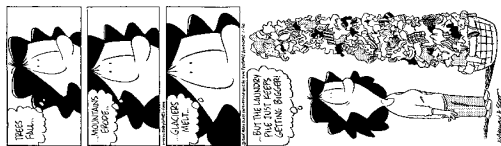
Fotrot



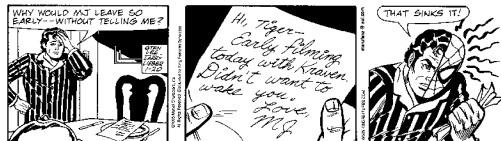
B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



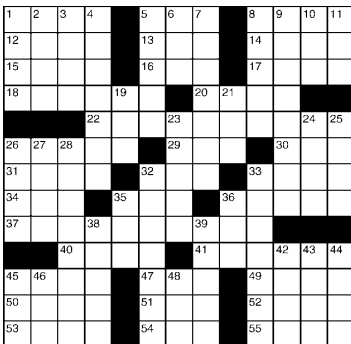
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Recruits' repast
- 5 Drill insert
- 8 Competent
- 12 Touch
- 13 Camel droppings?
- 14 Cat call
- 15 Moving man?
- 16 Mister Sebastian
- 17 Differently
- 18 Deep blue
- 20 Pealed
- 21 Pretentious official
- 26 They ain't worth a nickel
- 29 DHL rival
- 30 Santa —, Calif.
- 31 Piccadilly statue
- 32 Actress Irving
- 33 Mine entrance
- 34 Flightless bird
- 35 Clothing protector
- 36 Helps hoods
- 37 Old-style trousers
- 40 Semester
- 41 Proof of membership, maybe
- 45 Big con
- 46 Blueprint addition
- 49 Margarine
- 50 Met melody
- 51 Born
- 52 Yuletide refrain
- 53 Change for a C-note
- 54 Pitch
- 55 Farmer's home?

Down

- 1 Amahl's night visitors
- 2 Black, in verse
- 3 Sought restitution
- 4 Bill Murray movie
- 5 Strips in the kitchen?
- 6 Seeking, in the personals (Abbr.)
- 7 Counseling
- 8 Make corrections
- 9 Capital of Serbia
- 10 — Lonely Boys
- 11 Lamb's dam
- 12 Petrol
- 21 Respond (Abbr.)
- 23 Type of shrimp
- 24 Troop group

- 25 Wilander of tennis
- 26 Profound
- 27 "My Friend —"
- 28 Between Pacific and Central
- 32 Physical woe
- 33 Run off
- 35 Tavern
- 36 Moreover
- 38 Rangers' place
- 39 Prudhoe Bay vessel
- 42 Lotion additive
- 43 Stagger
- 44 Gussy (up)
- 45 Part of an Uncle Sam costume
- 46 Raw rock
- 48 Meadow

Answer to Previous Puzzle



1-20

CRYPTOQUIP

UV V J HAWPXL FQ X WNE
XS KXAIFS, U LHJJNLF
U ENHDQ KUDI US VNA

XDD US L ENASP.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I WOULD GET AWFULLY SICK OF PUTTING RETREADS ON CARS. IT'S A PRETTY TIRING TASK.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals L

SCOREBOARD, FROM PAGE 24

College hockey

Tuesday's scores

EAST
 Canisius 3, Mercyhurst 2
 Connecticut 5, Sacred Heart 3
 Geneseo St. 5, Elmira 1
 Hobart 4, Buffalo 3
 Mass.-Dartmouth 4, Mass.-Boston 2
 Mass.-Lowell 6, Brown 0
 New England Coll. 3, Curry 3
 Nichols 8, Framingham St. 0
 Oswego St. 4, Hamilton 0
 Pace 6, Assumption 5, 5 OT
 UConn 1, Cortland St. 1
 The Williams 6, Middlebury 3

MIDWEST
 Michigan Tech 6, Notre Dame 2

Deals

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL

AMERICAN LEAGUE—Agreed to terms with Jose Molina, RHP Scott Shields and RHP Jarrod Washburn on one-year contracts.
TEXAS—Agreed to terms with RHP Scott Shields on a one-year contract.
NEW YORK YANKEES—Agreed to terms with RHP Eric Lirio on a one-year contract.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS—Agreed to terms with RHP Jason Jennings on a one-year contract.
BOSTON RED SOX—Agreed to terms with RHP Arroyo and 2B Mark Bellhorn on one-year contracts.
CHICAGO WHITE SOX—Agreed to terms with RHP Luis Valdez on a one-year contract.

CLEVELAND INDIANS—Agreed to terms with RHP Alex Cora on a two-year contract and RHP David Riske on a one-year contract.
OAKLAND ATHLETICS—Agreed to terms with RHP Octavio Dotel and OF Bobby Kielty on one-year contracts.

SEATTLE MARINERS—Agreed to terms with LHP Ron Villone on a two-year contract.
TEXAS RANGERS—Agreed to terms with C Kevin Cash, LHP Jon Switzer and RHP Wade Davis on one-year contracts.
TEXAS RANGERS—Agreed to terms with OF Greg Vaughn on a two-year contract and LHP Joe Kefauver on a one-year contract.

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS—Agreed to terms with RHP Brandon Lyon on a one-year contract.
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CHICAGO CUBS—Agreed to terms with C Michael Barrett on a one-year contract.
RHP Kyle Farnsworth and OF Corey Patterson on one-year contracts.
COLORADO ROCKIES—Agreed to terms with RHP Jason Jennings on a two-year contract and LHP Joe Kefauver on a one-year contract.



Alabama guard Earnest Shelton scored a career-high 34 points in the Crimson Tide's 98-49 victory over Mississippi State on Tuesday night.

Alabama hands Miss. St. worst defeat in 50 years

The Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Earnest Shelton scored a career-high 34 points and Alabama held Mississippi State without a field goal for nearly 15 minutes of the first half in a 98-49 victory Tuesday night, the Bulldogs' worst loss in 50 years.

The No. 22 Crimson Tide (14-3, 3-1 Southeastern Conference) allowed just three field goals in the first half for a 49-18 shutout, shutting down the Bulldogs' backcourt and denying star Lawrence Robb's uncontested shots at the basket.

It didn't get any better after that for No. 17 Mississippi State (15-4, 3-2), which matched its second-worst loss, a 113-64 defeat at Louisville on Dec. 8, 1954. The game was supposed to be a battle for early control of the SEC West, but it ended up looking more like a nonconference mismatch.

The Bulldogs trailed 9-8 early but went 14-3 without a field goal before Roberts banked one in with 1:04 left in the first half. They shot 3-for-20 in the half. Mississippi State, which fell to 1-2 since second-leading scorer Winsome Frazier was lost to a broken foot, has lost two straight road games since winning 16 in a row.

Without him, the Bulldogs had no answer for Shelton, Kennedy Winston (24 points) or Ronald Steele (10 assists).

With 23 points, Shelton outscored the Bulldogs by himself in their lowest-scoring first half of the season.

No. 18 Oklahoma 70, Texas A&M 54: At College Station, Texas, Drew Lender scored a season-high 23 points and the Sooners snapped the Aggies' 11-game home winning streak.

The Sooners (14-2, 3-0 Big 12) have won eight straight of 12 of 13.

Men's Top 25 Roundup

Lawrence McKenzie sparked Oklahoma's game-clasping 13-1 run with consecutive threes and Lavender finished it by scoring seven points to help seal the victory.

Antoine Wright led the Aggies (12-3, 1-3) with 24 points on 8-for-12 shooting, and was the only A&M player to score in double figures.

No. 19 Michigan St. 71, Purdue 64: At East Lansing, Mich., Maurice Ager scored 19 of his 21 points in the second half to help the Spartans get past the Boiler-makers.

The Spartans (11-3, 3-1 Big Ten) looked sluggish early, still reeling from their collapse at Wisconsin on Sunday, before Ager's sharp shooting late in the game.

Carl Landry scored a career-high 31 points for Purdue (4-11, 0-5) and David Teague had 13. The Boiler-makers are 0-5 in the Big Ten for the first time since the 1962-63 season.

St. John's 65, No. 21 Pittsburgh 62: At New York, Dwyll Hill scored 26 points, including three free throws in the final 25 seconds, and the Red Storm ended a three-game losing streak with a victory over the Panthers.

Hill, who had career highs of 29 and 30 in his last two games, only had three points over the final 15 minutes but they were enough to give the Red Storm (7-7, 1-3 Big East) their second victory this season over a ranked team.

Carl Krauser had 22 points, seven assists and eight turnovers for the Panthers (12-3, 3-2), who had won two in a row after dropping two straight at home.

Syracuse-Georgetown rivalry shows new life

No. 7 Orange prevail in overtime

By JOHN KERIS
 The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The rivalry between Georgetown and Syracuse proved to be one of the fiercest in college basketball.

The Hoyas had the volatile John Thompson proving the sidelines, while Syracuse's Jim Boeheim ranted and raved every time the teams played. With John Thompson III coaching the Hoyas now and Boeheim still around, the rivalry might be rekindled if Tuesday night's game is any indication of what lies ahead.

Given a second chance by Brandon Roman's big feet, the No. 7 Orange squeezed out a 78-73 victory over the Hoyas in overtime Tuesday night.

"They go out and fight hard every time. It's a tradition," said senior forward Hakim Warrick, who had 25 points and 11 rebounds to lead Syracuse (58-51, 5-0 Big East).

Last year, Syracuse won 57-54 at Georgetown on Gerry McNamara's three-pointer from the top of the key at the final buzzer. That was simply another low point in a bad season. The Hoyas won only 13 games under head coach Craig Esherick, their fewest since 1973-74, John Thompson's second year.

Worse still, Georgetown won only four league games, a record-low for the program, and was picked to finish at the bottom of the Big East this season.

But Thompson, whose famous father retired in 1999 after 27 years, was hired in April, and the results have been impressive.

With three freshmen starters, the Hoyas (11-5, 3-2) have won at Pittsburgh and Rutgers, threatened at Connecticut before falling 66-59, and were coming off a last-second victory at Villanova.

Bowman nearly made Syracuse the next victim in a season game that was tied seven times and had 10 lead changes.

After a free throw by Warrick gave Syracuse a 67-65 lead with 71 seconds left in regulation, Bowman was fouled by Craig Forth but missed the front end of a 1-and-1. McNamara then attempted a three-pointer, but the shot

rattled in and out with 36 seconds to go, giving the Hoyas one last shot.

"They worked the ball to Bowman at the top of the key, and he hit a jumper with 23 seconds left. But his size! 17 feet were barely on the three-point line and it left the score tied at 67, forcing overtime."

"I saw an opportunity and knocked it down," said Bowman, who scored 19 points before fouling out in the final seconds. "I thought it was a three, but I guess my shoes are too big. I wish I was a size 14."

It was so close, the officials looked at the replay before ruling it a two-point shot.

"We wanted to put the ball in his [Bowman's] hands and let him decide," Thompson said. "I thought he was behind the line, but the replay showed he wasn't. Obviously, we're not going home the way we wanted to."

Syracuse scored the first second-half basket in overtime and won its 11th straight.

"Thank God he was on the line," said McNamara, who scored 17 points and made five three-pointers to run his career total to a school-record 251. "We knew we were going to play a tough team."

Against the Orange's loss to Oklahoma State, Georgetown gave Syracuse its toughest game of the season despite serious foul trouble for its top three scorers.

Freshman Jeff Green, who fouled out with 4:44 left in regulation, finished with 12 points, five rebounds and five assists, and Assistant Coach who was called for his fourth foul less than 2 minutes into the second half, had only seven points in 18 minutes.

Syracuse took charge early in the overtime. Louie McCroskey hit a 15-foot baseline jumper to start the biggest run of the game for either team, McNamara shot a 13-footer from the right corner after Bowman missed two more free throws, and Warrick sailed in alone for a resounding one-hand slam dunk after a turnover in the lane by Jonathan Wallace.

That gave Syracuse a 74-67 lead, the largest for either team, and the Hoyas couldn't recover.

Wake: Galloway, Thornton lift FSU offense in extra period

WAKE, FROM BACK PAGE

Florida State's first four of the overtime, and finished with a game-high 10 rebounds.

"We needed that type of effort from them and they all came through," Haze said. "Chris Paul scored 29 points, just one shy of his career high, Downey added 18 and Eric Williams had 18 for Wake Forest."

Paul, who was called for his field, made 10 straight free throws and led the Demon Deacons with nine rebounds.

"You've got to stop somebody and we couldn't stop anybody," Prosser said.

At Thornton and Galloway took up the slack after Wafer cooled.

Galloway scored nine points in the overtime, and Thornton made an 89-80 lead with 37 seconds left.

Thornton scored 20 of his 26 points after halftime, including

On the edge of leaving

Without a contract for the upcoming season, James might part ways with stymied Colts

By TOM HANSON

Naples (Fla.) Daily News

Over the years, Indianapolis Colts running back Edgerrin James has netted several enviable possessions.

He has a Bentley, a speedboat and a couple of NFL rusting titles. And if he isn't smiling, the sparkling bling on his neck shows off the riches of his six-year NFL career.

But there's one piece of jewelry, one worldly possession, he hasn't yet garnered — thanks or no thanks to the New England Patriots. For the second straight season, the Patriots have ended Edgerrin's Colts' season. New England keeps everyone in Indy dreaming of a ring.

A trip to the NFL title game, however, isn't the only thing Edgerrin is soon to be without.

Currently, he doesn't have a new contract. And even though he's has plenty of money, he might not be able to buy his freedom.

Edgerrin's future is much like Randy Moss's hair and ego — up in the air.

He becomes an unrestricted free agent on March 1. Working under a tight salary

cap, the Colts are unable to give the 26-year-old a long-term contract after locking up wide receivers Marvin Harrison and Brandon Stokley to new multiyear deals.

But Indianapolis could keep their 1999 first-round pick for one more season by giving him the franchise tag by Feb. 22. Colts owner Jim Irsay said in December that it's a done deal.

However, Edge's 37 yards in another loss to the Patriots might change his thinking. As the franchise player, the Colts would have to pay the former Miami Hurricane the average salary of the NFL's top five running backs.

That would net Edgerrin at least \$8 million for one season. But that's all he'll be guaranteed. No long-term security and nothing for his finger.

While keeping Edgerrin would keep the Colts' offensive three-headed juggernaut of Peyton Manning, James and Harrison together another year, it doesn't help Indianapolis' dismal defense.

The Colts are 34-6 when Edgerrin rushes for 100 yards or more, but that hasn't carried them past the AFC championship game.

Plus, Edgerrin isn't the only potential free agent. With offensive tackle Ryan



Edgerrin James (32), one of four NFL players to exceed 2,000 total yards in three seasons, might receive the team's franchise tag, leaving him in a Colts uniform for another year.

er Rob Morris just three of the nine potential free agents, Indianapolis will fill holes instead of opening them for Edge.

And does he — more season in the shadow of Manning benefit Edgerrin?

This season, his second after knee surgery, James finished third in the AFC with 1,548 rushing yards. His average of 4.6 yards a carry was the best of his career. He caught 51 passes for 483 yards, which gave him more than 2,000 yards from scrimmage for the third time in his career. Only

Walter Payton, Eric Dickerson and Marshall Faulk have accomplished the feat more, four times apiece.

Edgerrin's reward is his third trip to the Pro Bowl, his first since leading the league in rushing in 2000.

"This means more because I was able to get back playing at this level," he said. "It shows how hard I worked to get back."

While a trip to the beaches of Honolulu sounds like paradise, it's not Jacksonville. And it doesn't buy his freedom.

The curtain falls on Vikings' tragicomedy

By PATRICK REUSSE

Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune

MINNEAPOLIS — Ridiculing the Vikings has been a staple for the cable-TV analysts, and the nation's sporting press dating to the 41-0 setback against the New York Giants in the 2000 postseason.

The Vikings returned to the playoffs this month, and actually won a game in Green Bay, but they again departed to hoots of press box derision in Sunday's 27-14 loss at Philadelphia.

The cartoonish attempt to execute a fake field goal made it too easy for the Purple's media critics.

Two dozen people on the Vikings sideline making signals — some telling Randy Moss to "get off," others to "stay on," others warning a timeout.

"The Minnesota Vikings just about have the game of football figured out except for small matters like fake field goals are supposed to confuse the other team," wrote columnist Bob Ford in the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Coach Mike Tice thought he was defending his operation when he said the Vikings spent two weeks preparing this play, only to have it foiled when Minnesota's Gary Wirtz took his regular spot in the blocking formation, making Moss one Purple too many.

On Monday, Tice remained proud of the concept, lamenting the Vikings had failed to execute "what I thought was a brilliantly designed [fake] field goal."

His love, lovable goals is to realize this, taking pride in the scheming and practice time that went into this fake only serves to

Commentary

increase the guffaws among his team's delighted naysayers.

"The Vikings spent two weeks plotting, practicing, and when the time comes, it looked like Homer Simpson coaching a Pop Warner team."

Who said that? Anyone who wants to.

The Vikings are this NFL-man's puntline again — as they were after 41-0, as they were after Nate (Nobody) Poole knocked them out of the 2003 playoffs on the season's last play, as they were after Moss' reverse pass in December, as they were when Moss exited early in early January, and as they were weeks later when he pantomimed dropping his pants.

You want the epitaph on this edition of the Vikings?

Here it is: They could fake a moon but not a field goal.

The tragicomic quality of this organization dates beyond the Massacre in the Meadowlands — dates back precisely 44 years, to Jan. 18, 1961, when Norm Van Brocklin was selected the Vikings' first coach.

He was forceful, wacky and eventually futile. His six seasons were the first act in the Purple's eternal blatant comedy.

Now, we have Act V or VI, and it dates to when?

Right — to Jan. 17, 1999, when Gary Anderson missed his field goal, and Morten Andersen made his, and a 15-1 offensive machine failed to reach the Super Bowl.



Star receiver Randy Moss' antics this season have exemplified the lack of discipline that is damaging Minnesota's chances of success.

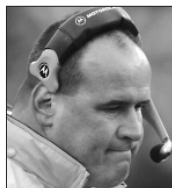
If you don't think this is all connected, tell me then, who was the placekicker lined up for a chip shot Sunday in Philly, when Big Mike decided it was time to forgo three points and unveil the Vikings' devilish scheme he had bursting inside his large cranium for two weeks?

Morten Andersen, that's who. Yup. This is all connected. Good things happen to the Vikings, so bad things can happen to the Vikings. Consider:

■ Van Brocklin and his rookie quarterback, Fran Tarkenton, beat the Chicago Bears in the team's first game, so they could both depart six years later in a bitter dispute.

■ Tice and his Vikings upset the Packers in a playoff meeting between rivals, so Tice and his Vikings can play the stooges for their hooting critics a week later, turning brilliant design into a scene from a Wes Anderson movie.

■ The Vikings draft Moss in April 1998 and immediately put together an amazing offensive machine, so six years later they can be the fools for the nation's football followers.



Vikings coach Mike Tice touted his call for a fake field goal on Sunday, which resulted in failure when the team did not have the proper personnel on the field.

Tice dedicated much effort — starting in minicamps — to bring more discipline. All the barking, all the drills, and the Vikings reduced their penalty total from 127 in 2003 to 117 this season.

Some progress, and then came Sunday, when four of the Eagles' 10 most important plays were Vikings penalties against Philly's receivers.

The Vikings remained unhappy Monday over the ticky-tacky nature of three of those calls. But maybe a team with a water-squirting, early-leaving, moon-faking star receiver is going to look guilty in any 50-50 situation.

Maybe a franchise that has as its public face someone who is proud to say he doesn't listen to anybody and never will — maybe that's a team that will stay true to its tragicomic roots, until the organization finds the guts to make a move that would be as bold and dramatic as Tarkenton's return from the Giants in 1972.

This is football. Discipline is needed to win. As long as Moss is around, the Vikings won't have it.

Hackett resigns from Jets

The Associated Press

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — New York Jets offensive coordinator Paul Hackett resigned Wednesday, ending a four-year stint marked by criticism for his conservative play-calling.

The move was expected after the Jets' 20-17 overtime loss to Pittsburgh on Saturday.

Jets head coach Herman Edwards "and I agreed that the time was right to move in another direction," Hackett said in a statement.

"There are other opportunities that I would like to explore. I leave knowing that I've worked extremely hard and had a hand in the organization's recent success."

The Jets showed little imagination in their version of the West Coast offense, ranking 17th in the NFL in scoring this season, even though Curtis Martin led the league in rushing with 1,697 yards.

Chad Pennington threw for 2,673 yards and 16 touchdowns, while the Jets ranked 22nd in passing yards.

Perhaps most upsetting to team officials was the lack of offensive scoring in four games against Pittsburgh and New England, in which they managed just two touchdowns.

"The biggest negative is not being able to score enough points on these games," General Manager Terry Bowden said Tuesday. "You can go back, and find out that there were probably a bunch of plays that were left on the field."

Eagles' defense finds strength in numbers

BY BOB BROOKOVER
The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — This is not the same defense that the Philadelphia Eagles took into the past three NFC championship games. It's not even the same defense they took into Pittsburgh 11 weeks ago, when the Steelers steamrolled them for 252 rushing yards on their way to a lopsided 24-point victory.

The Eagles' defense that will take the field in Sunday's NFC title game against the Atlanta Falcons has much more speed, many more players and so much more depth than ever before.

It also is in good health. Defensive coordinator Jim Johnson loves all of the above.

The speed factor should come in particularly handy against the Falcons, who have that quarterback who's faster than a speeding bullet, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound and, if you believe the Nike commercial, capable of throwing a football out of the stadium.

Michael Vick is dangerous, but he's not Super Quarterback.

History tells us that a fast, complicated defense can cause major problems for Vick and the Falcons. The most recent proof is Tampa Bay.

The Falcons' NFC South rivals has linebacker Derrick Brooks and defensive end Simeon Rice, and they both have the ability to put pressure on Vick.

When the Bucs blanked Vick and the Falcons 27-0 in Week 13, the quarterback ran for 81 yards,

but he was sacked five times and threw two interceptions. The Falcons finished with 92 passing yards in that day.

"Tampa has quickness," Johnson said. "And they were able to get turnovers against them in that game. There was a sequence in that game where Atlanta went right down the field and then turned it over on the 1-yard line. Part of stopping that team is getting turnovers."

The Eagles got second-half interceptions Sunday from Ike Reese and Jeremiah Trotter in their win over Minnesota, and that sucked the life out of Dan Culpepper, Randy Moss and the Vikings.

That's why players make as so vital in the postseason.

A year ago, the only outside pressure the Eagles got in the playoffs was from their championship-starved fan base. In their previous three NFC title games, they have had one sack, which resulted in a loss of 2 yards. And that was in their first title game against St. Louis.

They also have forced just one turnover in the three title games.

That came against Tampa Bay on a Bobby Taylor interception and did not result in points.

It's hard to imagine this Eagles defense, with Devin Kease applying pressure from the outside and Trotter wreaking havoc in the middle, going an entire game without a turnover or a sack.

The Eagles have forced at least one turnover and made one sack in every game but one this season, and that was the season finale against Cincinnati when exhibi-



9 p.m. Sunday:
AFN-A, AFN-P, AFN-Radio

Game time is Central European.

tion football made an appearance in January.

The Eagles are not a bend-but-not-break defense. They were a year ago against Carolina, but that changed after the Pittsburgh loss when Trotter regained his starting linebacker job. The gap in the middle of the Eagles' defense significantly narrowed after that.

Vick, as quick as he is, takes his share of sacks, and the Falcons allow their share. Their total of 50 was tied for the fourth most in the NFC and the fifth most in the NFL. Vick was sacked 46 times, tied for second most in the NFL. Only Houston's David Carr (49) was sacked more times, and he threw 145 more passes than Vick.

"Sometimes Vick runs himself into sacks," an NFL scout said.

Vick is also prone to surrender the football. He fumbled it a league-high 17 times this season and lost seven, which was tied for the league lead with Baltimore's Kyle Boller. He also threw 12 interceptions.

The Eagles, like Tampa Bay, have the speed to run Vick into mistakes.

As much as having speed and players makes the Eagles, they also have strength in numbers.

"We've just got a lot of guys on this defense who are role players," Johnson said. "I don't think I've ever had this many role players on a defense before."

Patriots buy what Belichick is selling

BY CHUCK FINDER
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

FOXBORO, Mass. — Willie McGinest launched into his argument his bulky pulpit was the first stall on the left, closest to the entrance to the New England Patriots' locker room underneath Gillette Stadium.

His congregants Sunday night were cameras, microphones and notepads.

His message was clearer than the moon over Cape Cod. Selfish professional football players of today can pray to their fallen idolatry elsewhere.

Here at the House of Unification, William Belichick presiding, there is nothing spoken but the word of togetherness.

"We exemplify the word

team," McGinest said. "Sports kind of got away from that concept. You get one really good player, you're seeing them mouth off on television."

"We're not big on that. We don't have the selfish guys a lot of people see."

New guys get that pretty quickly."

They strive for Sundays as one. It is the Patriots way of Belichick and Scott Pioli, the vice president and general manager, director who first joined the coach in Cleveland in 1992. Together in New England since 2000, they have founded their calling together: Bring the right players onto the tent, imbue cohesion and victories will come.

This is how a team went from \$10 million over the salary cap and only 36 Patriots on the roster in 2000 and won a Super Bowl the next season. This is how a team endured 42 starters and 25 different lineups last season to win another Super Bowl. This is how a team wins 30 of its past 32 games and rolls into Heinz Field for the AFC championship game Sunday with starting lineup that changed almost weekly this season.

You think the Pittsburgh Steelers endured injuries and alterations? The Patriots (45-2) compete with them statistically in those categories, with 19 starters on offense and 20 on defense.

Sunday night, when the Patriots upended popular pick Indianapolis while limiting the record-setting offense to just one field goal in a 20-3 victory, New England had another new starter. Twelve-year veteran Troy Brown revealed in telling the media afterward that it was his first start to day receiver this season, after 51 starts in the previous five seasons.

No, under Belichick and Pioli, according to their gospel of unification, this particular old guy is a nickel back now. Plays it with passion and abandon, as weird as a relative of No. 80 looks in the secondary. Plays it regularly — with the Colts seemingly picking on him Sunday with eight passes to slot re-

ceiver Brandon Stokley — but also still plays receiver (two catches for 13 yards) and returns punts (two for 28). Plays it all because it is the Patriots' thing to do.

"I didn't start calling up all the networks and saying 'Come cover me' because I'm playing both ways now," Brown said. "It doesn't matter if I start or not. My team needed me in a position that I wasn't used to playing (defensive back), and that's what I did. Whatever it takes to help this football team."

"A lot of guys wouldn't do that," Patriots linebacker Ted Johnson said.

This is the philosophy Pioli and Belichick sell when searching for players, and their Patriots buy, buy, buy... all the way to a 60-27 record since 2000.



Game time is Central European.

Linebacker Mike Vrabel, a player the Steelers never could quite find a steady fit in, found a meager \$225,000 bonus and a two-way home with New England. He starts on defense and plays goal-line tight end, from where this season two touchdowns passed his caught.

Don Davis was a nine-year-linebacker who started for the first time in safety in the Patriots' final two regular-season games.

With regular cornerbacks Ty Law and Tyrone Poole on injured reserve, rookie Randall Gay started 10 games in three positions in the secondary.

"We had guys step up who haven't had a whole lot of experience," offensive tackle Matt Light said. "We do it every year, but it is just amazing. This is a great place to play if you want to win football games."

"Your motivation is just to compete and put your best effort out there and win," Belichick said. "We have a lot of guys like that in our locker room."

So they can cut loose a maldemeanor like Lawyer Milloy and nab a supposedly washed-up Rodney Harrison at safety. So they can trade for a disgruntled Corey Dillon. Because those players will adapt to the environment around the Patriots. It might seem like they're looking for sheep, players Belichick can herd. But, like McGinest, they're not. They're certainly aren't looking for wolves.

"When you're around guys like Teddy Bruschi and Willie (McGinest) and David (Givens) and Troy Brown and Joe Andruzzi, you're around those guys all day, good things wear off," said quarterback Tom Brady, the only nationally recognized star on a team where the true star is the system.

Continued McGinest from his pulpit: "It's about the best team that's left standing."

Two of the past three years, that was this Patriots House of Unification that Belichick and Pioli built.

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Hopkins to defend WBC title against Eastman

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Undisputed middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins will defend his WBC title against Howard Eastman on Feb. 19 at Staples Center.

The once-beaten Eastman, who was born in Guyana and now lives in England, is the WBC's second-ranked contender behind Felix Trinidad.

Hopkins, who turned 40 on Saturday, is coming off a ninth-round knockout of Oscar De La Hoya on Sept. 18 in Las Vegas, Hopkins' 19th successful title defense.

De La Hoya, who has been steadily expanding his role in the sport, is promoting the Hopkins-Eastman bout.

Hopkins, from Philadelphia, is 45-2-1 with 32 knockouts. He hasn't lost in more than a decade, since Roy Jones took an unanimous decision in 1993.

Hopkins' only other loss came in his first pro bout, a four-round majority decision defeat by Clinton Mitchell in 1988.

The 34-year-old Eastman is 40-1 and has 34 knockouts. His only loss was a 12-round majority decision to William Joppy for the vacant WBA middleweight crown on Nov. 17, 2001 in Las Vegas.

Two years later, Hopkins faced Joppy and won an unanimous 12-round decision.

Eastman has stayed busy, fighting eight times in the past two years and stopping six of those, including a ninth-round knockout of former world champion Hassine Cherif in 2003.

Jury awards \$60M to family of girl paralyzed by drunken football fan

HACKENSACK, N.J. — A jury awarded \$60 million Tuesday to the family of a girl

Sports briefs

paralyzed in a car wreck caused by a drunken football fan.

Ronald and Fazila Vemi were headed home from a pumpkin-picking trip in 1999 with their 2-year-old daughter, Antonia, when their car was hit by a truck driven by Daniel Lanza, 34. Antonia was paralyzed from the neck down.

Lanza, whose blood-alcohol level was more than twice the legal limit, is serving a five-year prison term for vehicular assault.

The family sued Aramark, the Giants Stadium concessionaire, claiming vendors sold beers to Lanza even though he was clearly drunk and that Aramark fostered an atmosphere in which intoxicated patrons were served.

The NFL forbids beer sales after the third quarter; the Giants shut down beer vendors after halftime. The stadium also mandates that fans can only buy two beers at a time — a rule Lanza sidestepped by tipping the vendor \$10, allowing him to buy six beers.

Big Ten acknowledges officiating error

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — The Big Ten has admitted an officiating error that could have cost Indiana a game it won in double overtime at Purdue last weekend.

Purdue's Carl Landry scored and was fouled with less than a second left in the first overtime on Saturday, but he then missed a free throw that would have won the game for the Boilermakers.

Instead, the score remained tied and the Hoosiers won 75-73 after the second OT period.

The Big Ten said Tuesday the officials in-

correctly interpreted rules regarding a basket made at or near the expiration of the game clock.

"While the foul was correctly called before time expired, the conference office's weekly review process showed that the ball was still in the hand of the Purdue shooter at the expiration of the game clock," the Big Ten said in a statement.

According to NCAA rules, the field goal should not have counted and Landry should have been awarded two free throws, the Big Ten said.

NBA switches pair of Heat games

NEW YORK — Not wanting Donovan McNabb to overshadow Shaquille O'Neal, the NBA made two schedule changes Tuesday to avoid having the Miami Heat-Philadelphia 76ers game conflict with the Philadelphia Eagles' NFL playoff game against Atlanta.

The Heat-76ers game in Philadelphia, originally scheduled for a 6 p.m. tipoff Sunday, was moved to 7 p.m. Monday.

Miami was originally scheduled to be home Monday night against the New Orleans Hornets, but that game has been moved up to Sunday at 6 p.m.

Ferrari, FIA and F1 agree to new deal

PARIS — Ferrari has signed a new Formula One deal through 2012, boosting F1 chief Bernie Ecclestone's chances of retaining control of the sport he's run for 25 years.

The FIA — the world governing body of motor sport — said Wednesday that Ferrari "had agreed to prolong the Concorde Agreement for the period 2008-2012."

The agreement is a contract covering the F1 teams, Ecclestone and the FIA. It spells

out how the sport is run and how its revenues are divided.

The new deal could fend off the break-away threat of Grand Prix World Championship, a company owned by four major carmakers in F1 — Ferrari, Mercedes, Renault and BMW. GPWC had announced plans to wrest control of the sport from Ecclestone and run the series beginning in 2008.

FIFA signs sponsorship deal with Adidas

ZURICH, Switzerland — FIFA has signed a \$351 million sponsorship deal with German sporting goods giant Adidas, officials announced Wednesday.

Under the deal, Adidas will become the soccer governing body's official supplier of sports equipment from 2007 until 2014 and will have sponsorship rights to all FIFA events, including the World Cup.

FINA pulls world swimming championships from Montreal

FRANKFURT, Germany — Swimming's governing body pulled the 2005 world championships from Montreal on Wednesday because of local organizers' failure to raise enough money.

FINA said it would accept news bids for the event and announce a new host by Feb. 15. Athens, the host of the 2004 Olympics, and Long Beach, Calif., are possible replacement sites, and the German swimming federation said it will consider submitting a bid from Munich or Berlin.

The championships were scheduled for July 17-31.

Canadian organizers said they were \$5 million short of meeting their \$30 million budget.

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Clemens asks for \$22 million in arbitration

Seven-time Cy Young winner's request is a record; Gagne gets two-year deal in L.A.

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Roger Clemens followed a record-setting season with a record-setting salary request. Eric Gagne, another Cy Young Award winner, got a big deal, too.

After winning his seventh Cy Young Award, the Rocket asked for \$22 million in salary arbitration Tuesday, easily topping the previous high of \$18.5 million by New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter in 2001.

Clemens, who still hasn't decided whether to pitch this year or retire, was offered \$13.5 million by his hometown Houston Astros. The \$8.5 million difference was exactly double the previous record spread, set by the Yankees and Jeter.

Baseball roundup

"We are proceeding down the arbitration path as if Roger were going to play," Clemens' agent, Randy Hendricks, said. "He has not yet decided whether to play in 2005, but I expect him to do so by Feb. 1 at the latest."

Not only does Clemens wear No. 22 on his uniform, he would be playing his 22nd major league season.

"We looked at what some of the comparables were — Greg Maddux, Randy Johnson — and we tried to use those star-quality players to come up with a number," Astros General Manager Tim Lincecum said.

Rather than swap figures with the Dodgers, Gagne agreed to a \$19 million, two-year deal with Los Angeles that contains a club option for 2007. Gagne, the 2003 NL Cy Young winner, has the right to void the option year, however, and become a free agent.

"We wanted to do everything we could to try to keep him," Dodgers General Manager Paul DePodesta said. "I don't like to be put in a position where we're pitted against one of our players."

Clemens was among 40 players who exchanged figures with their teams, a group that included Astros outfielder Lance Berkman and AL Cy Young Award winner Johan Santana of the Minnesota Twins. Gagne was among 30 players who agreed to deals before the exchange.

In addition, the Cubs and catcher Michael Barrett agreed to a \$12 million, three-year contract after swapping proposals. Barrett became the 50th player to agree to a deal among the 59 who filed for arbitration Friday.

If he decides to play, Clemens could have the highest salary for a pitcher in a season, topping the \$17.5 million made last year by Boston's Pedro Martinez.

Johnson has the top salary among pitchers next year, calculated at \$16.5 million, including a prorated share of the \$1 million personal-services contract he signed with Arizona before he was traded to the New York Yankees.

Clemens, 42, left the Yankees after the 2003 season and intended to retire. But after former teammate Andy Pettitte signed with the

Astros, Clemens was persuaded to sign with his hometown club.

He took an undermarket deal that guaranteed him \$5 million, of which \$3.5 million was deferred with interest until July 1, 2006. Clemens earned an additional \$1,825,000 in bonuses based on his selection to the NL All-Star team and Houston's home attendance, which was more than 3.3 million, including the postseason.

Clemens had a remarkable season, going 18-4 with a 2.98 ERA and 218 strikeouts. As he did last winter, he says he is leaning toward retirement but has not ruled out playing.

"As I've said all along we're going to wait patiently for his answer," Purpura said. "Having Roger Clemens here is very important to the team, the city and the fans. It would be great to have Roger on board."

Berkman, eligible for free agency after next season, asked for \$11 million and the team offered \$10 million.

Santana, who went 20-6 with an AL-leading 2.61 ERA and 265 strikeouts, asked for a raise to \$6.8 million and was offered \$5 million. The left-hander lost his arbitration case last year and made \$1.6 million instead of his \$2.45 million request.

Ramirez asked for a raise from \$6 million to \$10.25 million and was offered \$8 million.

Tampa Bay had the most players who swapped figures with six, including right-hander Travis Harper, who had the smallest difference at \$190,000 (\$840,000 vs. \$650,000).

If settlements are not reached, hearings before panels of three arbitrators will be held next month.

Among those who agreed to contracts Tuesday were two other players who had become free agents: Seattle left-hander Ron Villone (\$4.2 million for two years) and Philadelphia second baseman Placido Polanco (\$4.6 million for one season). Phillies shortstop Jimmy Rollins got a \$3.85 million contract and pitcher Vicente Padilla agreed at \$3.2 million.

Anaheim agreed to contracts with pitchers Jarrod Washburn (\$6.5 million) and Scott Shields (\$925,000) and catcher Jose Molina (\$725,000). Colorado settled with pitchers Jason Jennings (\$7 million over two years) and Joe Kennedy (\$2.2 million).

World Series champion Boston agreed to one-year contracts with second baseman Mark Bellhorn (\$2.75 million) and right-hander Bronson Arroyo (\$1.85 million). Baltimore reached agreements with three players: pitchers B.J. Ryan (\$2.6 million) and Rodrigo Lopez (\$2,375,000), and second baseman Jerry Hairston Jr. (\$1.8 million).

The Cubs also agreed to one-year deals with center fielder Corey Patterson (\$2.8 million) and reliever Kyle Farnsworth (\$1,975,000).

Among free agents, the Indians agreed to a \$2.7 million, two-year deal with infielder Alex Cora and the New York Mets agreed to a minor league contract with reliever Roberto Hernandez.

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SPORTS

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With game on line, Wake Forest falters

FSU capitalizes on end of No. 3 Deacons' free-throw streak

BY BRENT KALLESTAD
The Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Wake Forest was right where it wanted to be: at the foul line with a chance to take the lead.

Then, the third-ranked Demon Deacons' top free-throw shooter did the unthinkable. He missed.

Wake Forest's NCAA record-streak of 50 consecutive free throws ended on Taron Downey's miss with the game tied at 76 and 4 seconds left, and Florida State went on to win 91-83 in overtime Tuesday night.

"That was a moment where I was probably a little concerned," Florida State coach Leonard Hamilton said.

"They had hit, what, 50 straight free throws."

Downey was fouled by Ralph Mims while making a desperation three-pointer.

"It felt good when it left my hand," Downey said. "But you know, it happens like that sometimes."

Wake Forest (15-2, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) made 32 straight foul shots Saturday in a 95-82 victory over North Carolina and its first 18 Tuesday night before Downey's miss.

Wake Forest's 50 straight free throws eclipsed the mark of 49 set in 1991 by Indiana State.

"They'd already set a record," Hamilton mused. "It was time to start another one."

Todd Galloway scored nine straight points in overtime and finished with a career-high 21 to help Florida State snap Wake Forest's 10-game winning streak.

Von Wafer scored 25 of his career-high 30 points in the first half as Florida State (10-8, 2-3) twice opened 19-point leads on its way to a 46-32 lead at halftime.

"We've talked about him for two days," Wake Forest coach Skip Prosser said. "He's a time bomb. Our players were cognizant of that."

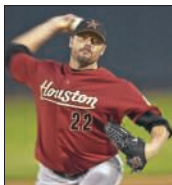
Prosser wanted his team to keep Wafer from getting the ball. "I haven't seen a guy yet score without the ball," Prosser said.

Wafer was 6-for-8 from three-point range and 9-for-13 overall in the first half. He was one of three Seminoles who had career highs.



Florida State's Adam Waleskowski, center, celebrates with the fans after a 91-83 overtime victory over No. 3 Wake Forest on Tuesday in Tallahassee, Fla. Wake Forest had won 10 straight going into the game.

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Clemens asks for record \$22 million in arbitration; Dodgers' Gagne signs for 2 years, \$19 million

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Sharapova rallies after dropping first set; Agassi, Safin, S. Williams move on with ease in Australian Open

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Nuggets' Bojkins scores record 15 in OT of victory over Sonics

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No. 22 Alabama clamps down on No. 17 Mississippi State

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